Scenario Collection

SCREAMS AND WHISPERS

KULT

◆ DIVINITY LOST ◆

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IT STARTED AND ENDED WITH SCREAMS

It Started and Ended with Screams is a scenario about personal trauma and the moral right to deliver retribution, even when outside the confines of mortal law. Each of the protagonists suffers devastating traumas on an almost daily basis, but the perpetrators are free without penalty. Forces within Metropolis wish to see these injustices corrected, while a servant of Inferno wishes to see these torments heightened. The player characters must choose one of two sides, with their lives and souls caught dangerously in the middle.

INTRODUCTION

Jails. Insane asylums. Hospitals in deprived countries. Warzones. Abattoirs. All make for frequent battlegrounds between the agents of Metropolis and Inferno. This may extend further to sleek high-rises in which depravities take place on the top floor, to out-of-the-way train stations where attacks are common, and alleyways only the bold and foolhardy walk through at night. The forces of heaven and hell grapple over the places respectable people avoid and only miscreants and the unlucky frequent. In this story, such a location is named "a center for troubled youths", one-part for counselling, one-part for schooling, and ninety-eight parts a terrible prison in which the inmates are children.

St. Jude's Center for Troubled Youths is a battleground between an angel of Geburah (a Seraphim) and a razide, with humans – some innocent, some certainly not – caught in the middle. Sometimes the angel pushes the site toward industry, progress, and a morbid form of hope, while other times the razide pulls it into chaos, torment, and pain.

The GM can set this story in any city they like, but the location in which the majority of the plot is based reeks of conflict, oil, and blood, with an ever-present yet distant sound of creaking and grinding, representing the gears of Elysium turning as the center shifts one way, then the next.

The Factory

A factory that produced small mechanical parts once occupied the location of St. Jude's Center for Troubled Youths. The owners of this factory, T. L. Bailey & Sons, held the property as a sweatshop for over a century, before upgrading to reasonable working conditions and finally shutting down as the company downsized and its trade was absorbed among companies abroad.

St. Jude's boldly bears a plaque on its front gate describing it as "A place where families come to work" dated to the year 1832. Children and women staffed the factory for its first hundred years of operation. Cruel working conditions led to spilled blood, concealed abuses, and a mortality rate that was never published. The Death Angels influence over the location grew and grew. A razide was sent to cement Inferno's power. Deaths on-site were concealed through quick corpse removal, or their destruction in the factory's heavy machinery. Scandals never came to light because the victims were threatened with the same fate. This was a place of bloodshed and trauma. Even if the horrors that took place were hidden from the outside world, a being in Metropolis noticed the schemes of Inferno. This creature, an angel of the Seraphim, dwelled in the labyrinths of the Machine City. From here it spied into Elysium and was able to influence St. Judes. Like its brethren it had succumbed to madness but still, in its twisted and deranged way, it served the will of the Archon Geburah.

The two forces used St. Jude as a battleground with its inhabitants as chess pieces in order to destroy the others' influence. Circumstances beyond their control led to the factory being closed down and sold to the city. Without any pawns the conflict came to a stalemate.

Both the angel and the razide share a manic obsession over St. Judes, and how to best their opponent in the right way. After years of stillness, now the conflict has started again.

It was the razide who in mortal guise procured the property from the city and subsequently changed it to an institution for teenagers. She remembered keenly how the best flavour of suffering came from the tears of the young.

St Jude's Team

The razide went about populating the Center for Troubled Youths with a handful of adult staff. Securing the backing of a priest, Father Vogel, allowed the center to benefit from church funding, gave it the respectable epithet of "St. Jude's". The razide appreciates the name as she identifies St. Jude as the patron saint of lost causes, and it reassures parents who want their troubled children to have an element of faith in their "recovery". The razide also hired Dr. Amy Crowe, a child psychologist, to work at the center and provide the children with a sense of support. Rounding the team out, Mr. Greep and Mrs. Edgewood were hired as teachers, Chanara Franklin as a maintenance worker and janitor, and Chris Speer as the cook. Importantly, the razide wanted a self-contained staff, as contractors rotating in and out of the center might address or report some of the horrors taking place within. The only staff she uses from outside are the security, who are not permitted to enter the center itself, but occupy an office just within the fence and watch for any escape attempts or more rarely, break-ins.

On the face of it, St. Jude's staff are all perfect picks for their roles. The razide ensured, however, that each of them comes equipped with a dark past ripe for blackmail and exploitation. Father Vogel was moved from parish to parish due to his repeated affairs with members of his congregation. Dr. Crowe has a habit of blabbing about her clients' issues when she drinks, which is often. Greep was quietly dismissed from his previous school for beating a child, Edgewood was likewise fired for accessing porn on school computers within sight of her pupils, and Speer is an ex-convict with a record for drug dealing and armed robbery. Only Franklin is without obvious sin, though the razide banks on her being so desperate for the work that she would let anything slide if she's receiving enough money.

The factory became a home, of sorts, seeing its first youths admitted. They were made comfortable initially, before the razide's influence over the staff led to terrible mistreatment in the form of love bombing, food poisonings, sexual abuse, encouragement of bullying, and sustained misery of all kinds. One staff member would be cruel while another would be kind, before the positions reversed, or all support disappeared.

The teenagers within weren't allowed to return to their families without a certificate from Dr. Crowe, and this is where the razide identified her biggest challenge. Despite Crowe's historic indiscretions, the razide didn't trust the psychologist to not free some of these kids out of guilt or because she deemed them mentally fit. Therefore, the razide murdered Crowe and took the doctor's form, which is how she appears to this day.

Troubled Childhoods

Our PCs in this story are all children, most of whom come from troubled backgrounds, who were unlucky enough to get caught doing something illegal, or were the unfortunate victims of family tragedy leading them to this place. The player characters are introduced in this game when they first come together on the bus to St. Jude's, but prior to that they will have lived lives that generate stories, intrigues, and flaws. This campaign prompts the gamemaster to jump to a flashback several times during the first chapter, to establish each character's background that led to them being on the bus today.

Care should be taken in presenting and profiling disturbed childhoods, due to the fact that many players might not feel comfortable with those themes. Please check the safety and consent guidelines on p. 163 in the Core Rules (or the expanded section in Beyond Darkness and Madness) for advice on how to address, handle, or avoid some of the sensitive issues this campaign might evoke. Be aware going into this story that the protagonists are children, they will be in a facility where care for their safety and happiness is not a concern, and they may end up damaged or harmed in a multitude of fashions.

The Battle

The razide has a plan for the new arrivals at St. Jude's. She wants to subject them to such hellish torment that the entire center devolves into bloodshed, abuse, and internal warfare. She wants the adults to feel so culpable that they'd rather conceal the truth than admit their guilt. She wants the children so broken and guilty that all of them, once innocent, will slide into Inferno with her, as a grand sacrifice to her beloved Sathariel. Sathariel is, of course, mostly ignorant to the activities at St. Jude's, but a descent into mayhem may be enough to spur the Death Angel of hopelessness, exclusion, and massacres. Everything until now has been a prologue of extended suffering. The razide, Dr. Crowe, wants to destroy all hope these children ever have of returning to a healthy, happy home.

This is where the angel returns to the story. The angel has been watching, waiting, and biding his time while the razide has played with the staff and children of St. Jude's. In a sense, the angel in its madness, has been edging his sense of pleasure and danger with the Center for Troubled Youths, bringing himself close to climax before pulling back each time. He can sense how close St. Jude's is to falling completely to Inferno, mortal inhabitants and all, and each time it comes close he teases the center back by providing a little order, a little stability, or a little hope to one of the inhabitants.

Now it's time for the climax. The angel wants to tease Inferno just enough to see the flames lick up the center's walls before granting so much undeniable hope in the form of retribution, anger, and homicidal justice that the razide and her servants lie defeated as the center swings into Metropolis with all its inhabitants, each willing to sacrifice for a chance at redemption. To do this, the angel reaches out to some of the center's children to galvanize them into action, offering them the freedom and justice they seek in exchange for a purge of the tormentors via their murderous service.

So It Goes...

This story starts with children having to survive days and nights of torment in the center before a kindly voice reaches them through the walls. The protagonists discover an old radio, plastered up behind a wall back when the building was converted from factory to youth center. This voice promises them retribution against their torturers if they prepare each of them for sacrifice. The voice gifts them the ability to fight back, unknowingly equipping them to serve the side of Metropolis in the eternal war against Inferno, but damning them to a different awful fate.

The story changes from one of helpless woe to a tale of bloody vengeance. With each sacrifice, the angel grows stronger. It reaches a crescendo as the angel summons a massive tekron to devour the entire building and drag every one of the individuals within to a hole in the Machine City, where unrelenting "justice" can be delivered to them again and again and again.

PCs may serve Metropolis eagerly, allowing revenge to consume them. They may attempt to flee the center as things turn to the worse, only to discover the reach of this elaborate ritual of torture extends farther than the center's walls. They could form a pact with the razide in the form of Dr. Crowe and fight back against the angel for promises that they will no longer be the persecuted but will instead be the persecutors.

It Started and Ended with Screams puts the PCs in a moral dilemma while giving them the power to decide for themselves what is right and wrong. How far justice goes, how far they satisfy their own needs, and whether they take up the mantle for Metropolis, Inferno, or themselves, leads to the story's conclusion. There are few happy endings in *KULT: Divinity Lost*, but in this story, the protagonists might find satisfaction in biting the hands of heaven or hell.

GAMEMASTER ADVICE

The gamemaster should read this scenario in advance of running, or, if not, keep careful track of characters' locations so they can describe the appropriate scenes PCs encounter.

Italicised text appears occasionally throughout this scenario. The GM can either read this aloud, or rephrase it into something appropriate for the scene. Each central scene has associated text in this format.

This scenario is built around the characters present, both the PCs and the NPCs. The GM should thoroughly read the character information presented for this scenario, much of this game's direction comes through PC interactions with NPCs.

Themes

It Started and Ended with Screams is about retribution, survival, and change. The gamemaster should keep these concepts at the forefront of her mind while running this scenario. How far is too far, when it comes to vengeance? Who is the arbiter of justice in extreme cases of victimisation and torment? What will the characters – and supporting cast – do to ensure their survival? Is there any good way to survive a situation like this one, where everyone is against you to some degree, and the environment itself wants to consume you? How does a child pick up the pieces and move forward, after suffering years of harm at the hands of those sworn to protect them?

The key theme is change. As Metropolis and Inferno encroach on St. Jude's and change its inhabitants and structure, the protagonists run the real risk of being physically and mentally consumed by concepts and entities more powerful than themselves. The body horror of assimilation contrasts with the internal change the characters must experience in order to survive the scenario. Accepting their situation, triumphing over their abusers, and helping each other might allow them each to change for the better.

While there is a prescribed story as part of It Started and Ended with Screams, the detail of the setting in this scenario can allow for any number of toolbox tales before the GM decides it's time to send St. Jude's tumbling into Inferno.

On Atmosphere

Emphasise the olfactory senses in this scenario. The smell of urine, blood, and sweat coat the insides of this facility, each room smelling worse than the last, until you blast the players with a suddenly sweet, clear room smell. Few descriptions capture a player's attention as strongly as that of a familiar flavour or scent, so do not be afraid to evoke players' memories of a hospital's stench, a locker room's pungent odour, or the taste of rusting metal and old leather.

Imprisonment And Escaping

When players are presented with a scenario in which their characters are trapped, a natural inclination will see them attempt to escape. This is absolutely acceptable and should not be obstructed. A decent escape attempt before the critical events of It Started and Ended with Screams might see youths reunited with families, attempting to survive on the streets of the city in which you set St. Jude's, or even in the company of police officers after informing them of some of the abuses taking place at the center.

While this scenario is not designed around a mundane escape, here are some ways for a GM to handle one:

- External security guards monitor cameras pointed at the facility's exterior and come equipped with tasers and swagger sticks. They are not afraid to use these on the youths, as Dr. Crowe has told them they're insured to use necessary force to prevent these "dangerous malcontents from going on a crime wave".
- In an escape attempt, at least one NPC youth should want to come along and generally slow the PCs down. If they escape with that child, this NPC's spirit breaks and as soon as they can get time alone, they call St. Jude's to tell the doctor where the children are hiding. Alternatively, if the characters seem destined to commit some heinous crime, the NPC calls the cops.
- If the children are reunited with parents or guardians, remind the players that many of these guardians chose or were court mandated to send their children to St. Jude's. Willingly or reluctantly, they get in touch with the authorities.
- As soon as the power cuts out in this scenario, the doors lock. The buzz of electricity continues to emanate from windows and doors. It is a secure facility, and the characters can only override the electricity using Dr. Crowe's or Chanara Franklin's override keys.
- The windows are all barred. Every single one. While escape is possible, it isn't easy and won't be as simple as climbing through an open window. The feeling of oppression in this facility is real.
- Apart from the razide and the angel, Chanara Franklin and troubled youth Oscar Bevois are the only individuals at St. Jude's who know about the ventilation shafts, ducts, and passages behind the facility walls. At least one duct leads up to the building rooftop, but the facility isn't connected to any other buildings and no ladder leads down to the ground outside.
- If returned following an escape attempt, any punishment visited on the PCs by the staff or their fellow inmates increases in severity. This should be roleplayed, where appropriate, with the perpetrators taking sadistic pleasure in denying the PCs their freedom.

On Mature Topics

It Started and Ended with Screams handles particularly sensitive topics, such as torture, sexual abuse, and murder. Sex crimes are devastating to the psyche of individuals and groups. It is rare anyone – whether victim, witness, police officer, friend, family member, or counsellor – walks away from a rape unchanged. Severe crimes, rape among them, cause ripples. All parties involved form strong opinions. Lives change forever. If the GM chooses to specify the abuses in this scenario as sexual, she should treat the subject with the gravitas it warrants and check with the players in advance whether this is the kind of material they're okay to handle. **Remember**: as soon as a player says "that's too much" or makes a gesture to indicate the same, don't question and move on to another scene. The purpose of any roleplaying scenario is for the participants to feel entertained; not traumatised.

We do not include sexual abuse to present a helpless victim, reinforce a villain's evil, or provide a form of perverse titillation. We want this scenario to explore the ripple effects of abuse, the fortitude of the survivors, and the polarising opinions the PCs possess handling the situation.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

Players should create their own characters for this scenario using the alternative system presented below. The following system ties characters to the scenario's setting and theme. All player characters must be between the ages of 12 and 19 (the admission age for youths at St. Jude's) and have experienced some kind of troubled past, which should be elaborated upon in their backgrounds.

Follow these steps and allow the players to choose one option from each category. Some of the options under *Role* and *Dark Secret* are unique to this story, and are detailed over the following pages. Each of these options has questions the player should answer to further define the character.

[1] Role: This story sees each character take on a Role from the cards on the following pages. Roles do not dictate Advantages or Disadvantages, but provide guidance for play and equip the gamemaster for the kind of events your characters will encounter.

[2] Dark Secrets: Choose one Dark Secret from this scenario.

[3] Disadvantages: Select one Disadvantage from the core rulebook.

[4] Advantages: Select one Advantage from the core rulebook that suits the character's concept. Each role has two Advantages to choose between.

[5] Passive Attributes: Assign the modifiers +2, +1, and +0 to **Fortitude**, **Reflexes**, and **Willpower**.

[6] Active Attributes: Assign the modifiers +3, +2, +1, +1, +0, −1, and −2 to **Charisma**, **Coolness**, **Intuition**, **Perception**, **Reason**, **Soul**, and **Violence**.

[7] Features: Outline the distinguishing features for the character's appearance.

[8] Name: Pick a name.

[9] Relations: Unless the characters know each other from the time outside of St. Jude's they will have no starting relations. Instead let the players establish relations to each other and other inmates during the scenario.

[10] Possessions: Determine what small personal items your character is taking to St. Jude's, if any. Are you required to wear a uniform or do you have your own clothes?

Role

Each character in this story occupies a Role. Consider carefully the kind of Role you want your character to occupy and how you might play up the Role's background and agenda. Roles have some crossover with Dark Secrets, but just because you're playing the Abandoned Role doesn't mean you have to take the Forgotten Dark Secret.

Dark Secret

Each player character should possess one Dark Secret from the cards.

PLAYER CHARACTERS AND COMBAT

You will not find any stats for monsters or human opponents in this scenario. The razide and massive tekron would tear the player characters apart in a direct confrontation. Let attacks just glance off them, there is no need to roll. Rather it should be about distracting them or escaping from them.

Against the human opponents let moves such as ***Engage in Combat*** result in a change of scenes and conditions rather than checking off wound boxes. For example: "You managed to stand your ground against the bullies, you are covered in bruises, but so are they."

The Bully

You always end up in trouble and often have to solve problems with your fists. You've had a cruel, vindictive side all your life, possibly as a result of uncaring parentage or abuse you've suffered. Unfortunately, rather than being able to process it, you take the unfairness of the world out on other children and even weak adults.

Questions

- What is the cause of your vindictive nature?
- What's your favourite way of bullying someone?

Advice

- Always try to assert yourself at the head of the pack.
- Making other people feel small makes you feel big.

Suggested Advantage

- Death Drive or Enforcer.

Role

The Damaged

You can't go back to your family. You just can't. Something happened at home. Something awful. Even thinking of it sends you into a tailspin. You've got to concentrate on what's going on now, right in front of you, and your recovery. Maybe you can deal with what happened when you're healthier, but now isn't the time nor the place.

Questions

- What causes you to experience panic or anxiety attacks?
- What's your preferred coping method?

Advice

- Fight to the death to prevent yourself from falling down again.
- Find a mentor you can trust.

Suggested Advantage

- Endure Trauma or Instinct

Role

The Gaslit

You've seen things, strange and terrible, but they've shot you so full of drugs and told you that you're "mad", you no longer believe in everything you've witnessed. The doctors have told you there's nothing more medication can do for you from this point, leading to you being placed in a site with other "troubled" kids like you. Maybe they'll believe you, or maybe the professionals have so gaslit you that you won't speak another word on the subject of the weird.

Questions

- What abiding memory will you always believe in?
- How did they convince you that what you saw was make believe?

Advice

- Whisper about the truth as you know it, or as you think you know it.
- Convince others they're mistaken when they're sure of something. After all, that's what's been done to you.

Suggested Advantage

- Enhanced Awareness or Sixth Sense

Role

The Abandoned

Everyone you have known and loved has left you. Maybe they were taken through violence or maybe you just became too much to handle and they dumped you on the side of the road. You've always felt abandoned and lost. The state probably sent you to St. Jude's because nobody else wanted you. You're used to abandonment, but maybe that equips you to become a fast friend to someone who needs one.

Questions

- In what situation(s) were you abandoned?
- What's the greatest kindness you've ever received?

Advice

- Struggle with trusting anyone.
- When you make a connection, cling on to it manically.

Suggested Advantage

- Escape Artist or Improviser

Role

The Plant

You're not unwell. You're not "maladjusted". You've not been sent here as a patient. You're like a mystery shopper, sent to St. Jude's to keep an eye on the children or the staff. Maybe you've been placed here on behalf of some governmental body responsible for regulating these kinds of places, or the staff recruited you as a mole. You've been assured – or rather, your guardians have been assured – of a healthy payment once this little experiment is done.

Questions

- Who made the decision for you to act as a "youth center researcher"?
- How do you feel about spying?

Advice

- Keep a pad where you jot down notes about the other children at St. Jude's.
- Allow your loyalties to be divided between the children and the staff at St. Jude's.

Suggested Advantage

- Crafty or Observant

Role

The Unfortunate

They made a terrible mistake sending you to St. Jude's. You didn't do anything wrong. It was the other kid. It's always the other kid. You try your best to be "good", and every time you get caught up in someone else's mess. Your guardians or the courts grew tired of your excuses and sent you to St. Jude's, but you maintain this is all a big mistake.

Questions

- What did you allegedly do to get sent to a place like this?
- How are you going to get out?

Advice

- Try to act as the stabilizing influence, at least for a time.
- Allow the mania of this place to grind you down. You don't deserve to be here. You shouldn't be here.

Suggested Advantage

- Good Samaritan or Perpetual Victim.

Role

* * *

ADDICT

Addiction at a young age is increasingly common, whether to video games, porn, cigarettes, alcohol, or hard drugs. Sometimes these addictions are even passed down to children from their parents. You are addicted to something and it leads you to your present state, as an attendee at St. Jude's. Without a ready supply of that which controls you, you're prone to lashing out and breaking down.

- What is the source of your addiction?
- Who enables your addiction?

Dark Secret

NIGHTMARES

You experience bizarre and horrifying nightmares almost every time you fall asleep, leaving you frightened and groggy during the day. Maybe the origin of these nightmares was a period of trauma, or perhaps they appeared from nowhere, but they now afflict you regularly. You see visions of other worlds and scenes of violence and no matter what you do, you can't escape them.

- What is your most commonly recurring dream?
- Have you seen any of the individuals from your nightmares in reality?

Dark Secret

BROKEN CHILDHOOD

A broken childhood can be anything from being the victim of child abuse to the fear you felt when your parents broke up and you were left in the custody of your alcoholic father. You cannot just “move on” or “get over” what happened to you when you were younger, and the suggestion that you should is likely to deeply upset you.

- Have you forgiven your parents?
- What physical or mental scars do you bear from your childhood?

Dark Secret

MENTAL ILLNESS

You have experienced psychotic episodes, leading to extended stays in hospitals and treatments from child therapists. Your parents despair that you’ll never be “normal” and you’ve never been certain of what “normal” even is. You hate the endless treatments, the patronizing psychiatrists, the medicine, the needles, and your parents talking about how it’s their problem.

- Who knows about your troubles?
- What would happen if you lost your supply of meds?

Dark Secret

GUILTY

You committed a crime, petty or major, and your admission to St. Jude’s is a part of your prescribed rehabilitation. Perhaps you stole from the corner store a few too many times, or maybe you cut your step-father’s brakes after watching a video tutorial. You’ve done something wrong, but you might not see it that way.

- Who was your victim?
- How do you feel about your crime?

Dark Secret

FORGOTTEN

You’ve lacked love and attention all your life. Your parents left you or were taken from you, and the government never sent anyone to pick up the pieces. Maybe other youths in similar situations filled the gap, perhaps you had to make it on your own, or a predator moved in to administer a different kind of “protection”.

- Why did your parents leave you?
- What did you do to survive?

Dark Secret

PARASITE

You’ve always been an excellent actor, ready to turn on the charm or ignite the sympathy in others at the drop of a hat. You may have even come from a functioning family, but you are dysfunctional, and compulsively lie or manipulate others to get what you want, telling stories of all the hurt you’ve suffered. Unfortunately, it’s now got you sent to St. Jude’s, but maybe there’s a way you can benefit from that too.

- What made you the way you are?
- What were you caught doing?

Dark Secret

ABDUCTED

You were taken hostage in a major criminal event, or locked away in your parents’ bunker where they told you that you couldn’t leave because of the “monsters” outside. Now you’re free, but society feels you need to be rehabilitated, and the court mandated your stay at St. Jude’s. Your life has been anything but normal until this point.

- Who abducted you?
- How did you escape?

Dark Secret

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

St. Jude's Center for Troubled Youths contains a small cast of supporting NPCs who will be on hand to torment and occasionally assist the PCs in this scenario. Not all of them need to be used, but each is outlined here with a few suggestions for each in how to involve them in scenes, beyond their appearances in the main plot.

The Staff

Dr. Amy Crowe

Amy Crowe was far from a perfect child psychologist before the razide murdered her and took her skin. She cared, but she also had a drinking problem and whenever she got sauced, her conversation always slipped to talking about her clients and the horrors they'd been through. She thought it made her interesting. All it did was isolate her, until she was employed at St. Jude's and found firm friendship with Father Vogel and the rest of the staff.

All that has ended now. The razide murdered Dr. Crowe because the child psychologist was a little too caring, and though the razide enjoyed watching humans suffering due to human neglect and cruelty, her schedule was moving too slowly, compelling her to eliminate Crowe and take on the doctor's role herself.

- Each child should have at least one therapy session with Dr. Crowe, where the razide will make every effort to seem compassionate and interested, but push the PCs to *"Let your anger out, keeping it in can be harmful"* and other such advice.
- If a child goes to Dr. Crowe to complain about bullying or abuse, she gives them a hug and promises to look into it as *"an urgent matter"*. She advises the child to *"stay strong, because pain ends"* before saying she has some extremely important calls to make.
- If PCs force Dr. Crowe to witness evidence of abuse, she acts shocked before drawing the victim and perpetrator together for a meeting, where she blames both, orders them to talk about their feelings, and then says, *"To show you mean to get on better, you will be sharing a dorm tonight."* She wants to aggravate the abuse, not fix it.

Father Stan Vogel

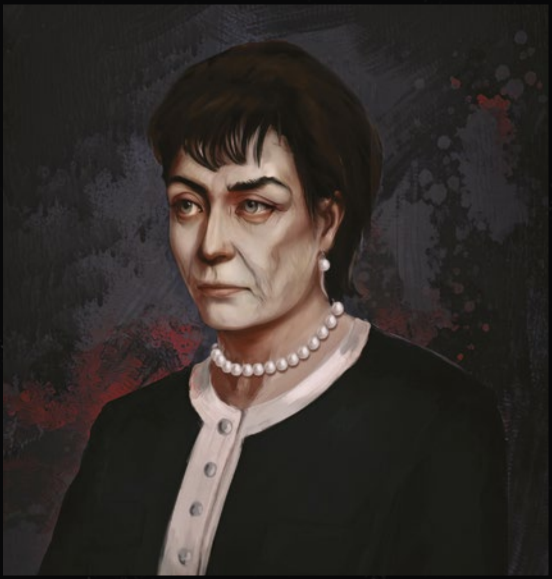
Father Vogel's connection to St. Jude's allows the center to benefit from church funding, which is the main reason for his presence there. He really doesn't care much for the children at the center, and is more interested in being able to hold down a "parish" due to him having been moved from church to church for the last 15 years due to repeated sexual indiscretions. When everything comes collapsing down around the center's inhabitants, he believes it's God's punishment for his failures. Rather than rise to the challenge, he shuts himself away in the chapel, praying and weeping until he meets his end.

- Vogel only takes an interest in the children if they come to him with spiritual matters, in which case he listens intently and imparts "wisdom" in the form of Bible verses , which often have little to do with the present situation. As soon as discussion returns to the practical realm, he tells them to speak to Dr. Crowe.
- If any of the PCs are girls aged 16 or over, Vogel will make efforts to seclude one in his chapel in the evening, and speak to them deeply about their wants and concerns. When there, he attempts to coax them into kissing or fondling him, before chastising them for "Leading him astray". He promises terrible punishments if they speak of this. If a PC reports Vogel's behaviour to another adult at the center, the majority go to Dr. Crowe with the report, while others just do nothing. If the PCs persuade the adult to go to the police about it, Vogel disappears from the center one night and doesn't return. None of the adults claim to know where he went, but the reality is razide Dr. Crowe devoured him.
- All PCs should attend at least one church service with Father Vogel, irrespective of their personal religious beliefs. He even takes confession, and surprisingly, keeps it to himself. Unfortunately, this means he doesn't act on any reports of abusive behaviour.

Mr. Edward Greep

Edward Greep is an old, bored, disciplinarian of a teacher. He's at the center for the paycheck and nothing more. His lessons come straight from the textbook. Anything more than that is too much effort. The only things that get him going is Felicity Edgewood, with whom he's having an affair, and child misbehaviour, which he punishes at first verbally, ridiculing them in class, and then physically, throwing them into walls, smacking them across the head, or bending them over the desk to beat with his blackboard rubber or his bare hand. Greep's soul is practically dead, alive only for these moments of passion. When the center comes crashing down, he decides to experience one last burst of passion, and seeks out Mrs. Edgewood.

- The PCs should experience daily lessons with Mr. Greep, in which he drones on about languages and literature. In each lesson, one child should get another in trouble, or Greep loses his temper for no reason with a child, maybe because *"you're looking at me with a wise-ass grin."* Greep then punishes the child he feels is responsible in front of all the other children.
- The PCs should catch Greep having sex with Edgewood one night. Greep threatens the witness with violence while Edgewood offers to let them watch, saying *"they might learn something."*
- The only way to meet Greep at a common, sympathetic level is to speak about his favourite sports team. The GM should select one local to where the game is taking place. Greep doesn't give much insight into his love of the sport, except in examples he makes of people who made a success of their lives.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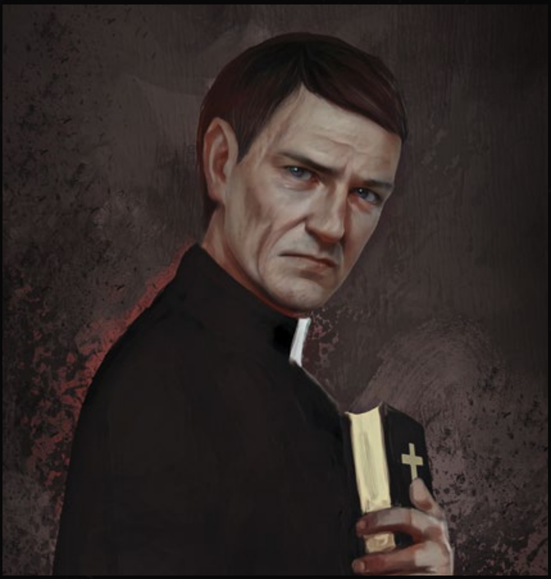
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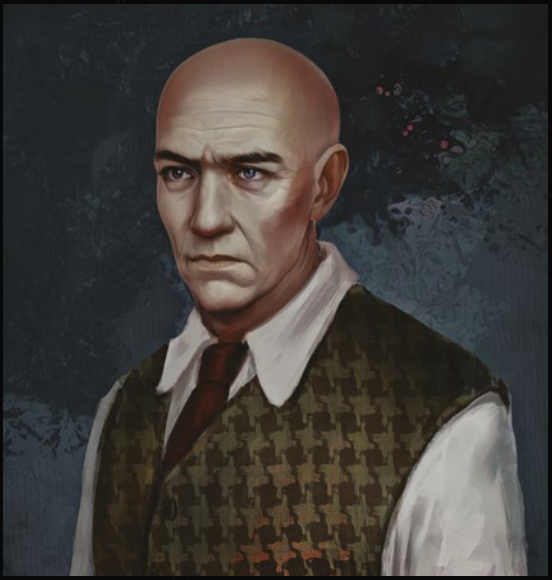
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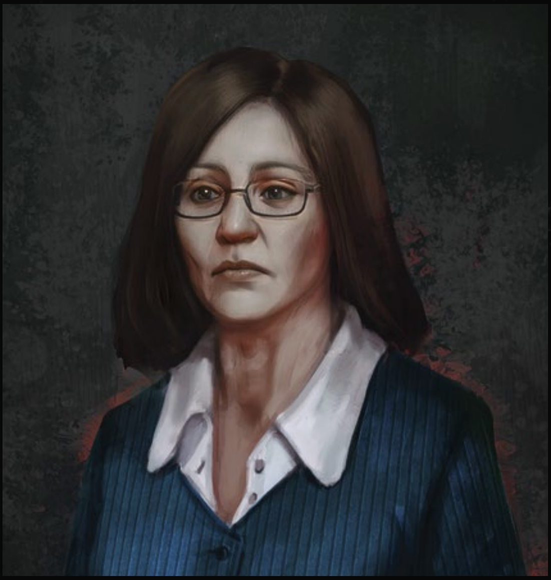
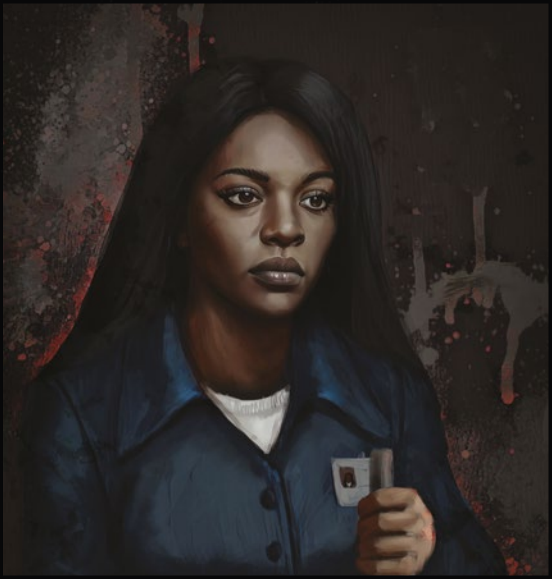
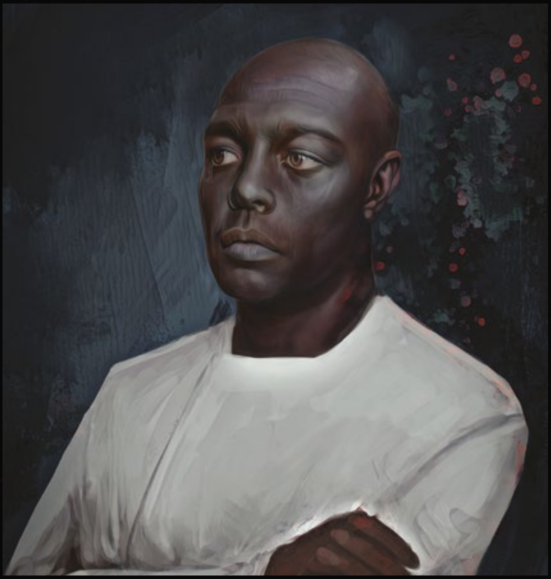

Mrs. Felicity Edgewood


Chanara Franklin


Chris Speer

Mrs. Felicity Edgewood

Like the majority of St. Jude' staff, Mrs. Edgewood isn't here because she wants to be, but because she can't find a job elsewhere. In fact, she has no licence to teach or care for pupils, due to her regularly letting students view pornography on her computer at her last job. Due to a curious set of circumstances in which she attended Father Vogel's previous church and had sex with him (after which she tried to blackmail him), he offered her a role as a teacher at St. Jude's. When the end comes to St. Jude's, Edgewood does everything in her power to escape the collapsing facility, including throwing others into harm's way.

- Felicity Edgewood isn't cruel or physically abusive in any way, but she is a predator who enjoys seeing how children react to sexualized or shocking content. She will watch a PC being tormented and do nothing to stop it. She may even file her nails or take a phone call.
- Every PC should attend a mathematics and sciences lesson with Mrs. Edgewood, where she attempts to make the subject matter interesting (she does love education), but has no desire to engage with the students on matters outside of the lesson. If a PC approaches her in confidence about any form of bullying or abuse, she puts on a sympathetic face and says, *"My childhood was shit too, but you'll get through it."*
- The PCs should at some point witness Edgewood putting the screws to Vogel about *"that tape of us in the vestry"* and him angrily responding *"haven't I given you what you wanted?"* If the PCs make their presence known, Vogel storms off while Edgewood laughs.

Chanara Franklin

A maintenance worker and a janitor, as well as a beacon of honesty in a sea of assholes, Chanara Franklin is at St. Jude's because she's desperate. The razide knows desperation forces humans to do desperate things, and Chanara proves this theory by turning a blind eye to all manner of horrors at St. Jude's in order to keep her job. Chanara has a breaking point, however. During the facility's collapse, Chanara feels possessed to go and beat Dr. Crowe to death with a hammer, the distant angel influencing her actions.

- Chanara speaks with the children like they're equals, as long as other adults aren't around to see it. At least once in the scenario, she should be more friendly than anyone the PCs have met, only to clam up as soon as an NPC like Vogel or Crowe enters the scene.
- Chanara has a small room at the site, where she sleeps next to her cleaning and maintenance equipment. A PC should stumble upon this room and be confronted by Chanara, who seems angry at first, but quickly relents and provides a rare moment of genuine warmth for the PCs.
- If Chanara witnesses abuse, the first thing she attempts to do is provide comfort by giving the victims sweets or toys she brings in from the outside. If the abuse continues, she says she's going to speak with Dr. Crowe. The first meeting doesn't go well, but she stays at the facility. If she needs to attend a second one, Crowe kills her.

Chris Speer

Chris Speer works the canteen at St. Jude's as the head cook. Sometimes he allows the children of St. Jude's to work in the canteen as long as the older children supervise the younger ones. Chris is an ex-convict with a record for drug dealing and armed robbery, and this is his first job following his release. He has to maintain gainful employment as a condition of his parole, and so he won't risk losing it over some whining kids. He's very careful not to break the law, and would rather turn a blind eye to abuse than intervene and risk an assault charge. Despite that, he's no sadist and offers the PCs advice on how to stay out of trouble. During the facility's collapse, Chris will try to make a break for it and save his own hide, likely resulting in him getting killed. If PCs are near him, he'll work with them to break out.

- Chris serves up food enthusiastically, explaining what's for dinner and the time he's taken to make it taste good. He sees one of the PCs get shoved by an NPC and he immediately shuts up, looking down at the food and quietly serving the meal.
- The quality of Chris' food degrades with each additional day, due to the man's awareness of how awful St. Jude's is and his inability to get out of there. He stops caring rapidly. He makes eye contact with a PC, and it's obvious he's sad and distressed, but he won't say why.
- One of the PCs is being harassed by NPCs. Chris doesn't intervene, but afterward approaches the PC and gives some worldly advice to *"raise your hands, fight back, and be a bigger psycho than the aggressor."*

The Residents

The following are examples of children at St. Jude's.

Isaac Hill

An aggressive bully with a real mean streak, who enjoys attacking other children and compelling them to hand over anything of value.

- Isaac holds up one of the PCs in a secluded spot, and grabs them by their genitals to threaten them. He tells them to bring him their suitcase and all their things, otherwise the next time he grabs them he'll break or tear something.
- Isaac commands the respect of some of the other youths in the facility, and one night, some of the NPC children drag one of the PCs from their bed to a cupboard, at Isaac's order. He locks them in the cupboard for the night and tells them he's going to steal or piss on all their stuff.

Georgina Barton "Flip"

A distressed individual who doesn't know her reason for being at St. Jude's. The last she remembers, she was happily at home with her family.

- Georgina begs the PCs to help her escape. She maintains she's there through a case of mistaken identity and her parents are waiting for her on the outside. She promises a reward if they help her.
- If the PCs go to Dr. Crowe about Georgina, the razide tells them that Georgina's grip on reality snapped when her parents were killed in a home invasion. She has selective amnesia, and they're encouraged to talk with her about her forgotten past. Doing so sends Georgina into a violent rage or complete breakdown, unless handled incredibly sensitively. The razide is content to provoke these outbursts via the PCs' actions.

Dillon Poke "Pokey"

An emotionally detached and socially awkward young man, Dillon was sent to St. Jude's after starting a fire that consumed his parents' garage. Nobody was hurt, but Dr. Crowe believes he intended on killing his parents.

- Dillon keeps to himself but stares at the other children in the facility. He doesn't fight back when bullied and doesn't raise his voice when he witnesses abusive treatment. He does, however, start fires when the other children are sleeping, targeting their belongings, their beds, and wardrobes full of clothes. Dillon is a "gifted" boy, and can start these fires through a discreet communion with the razide, though he's unaware of the deal he's made or the true power at his disposal.
- Dillon doesn't actively target any of the PCs for harm, but characters like Isaac Hill drag him to bear witness to other abuse. He should always be there in the background, watching as horror unfolds. Even as the facility collapses, he does nothing to defend himself from harm.

Frances Coachman "Rattle"

In and out of facilities her entire short life, Frances has experienced several abusive homes and foster parents, and is now purely a ward of the state. The other children call her "Rattle" because of the number of drugs she's prescribed to take each day. These keep her sedated and in bed.

- One of the other children, perhaps Isaac Hill or Alia Johnson, steals Frances' drugs. Frances panics and begs other children to help her recover her supply. Depending on the bully, they might be flushed, hidden, or even consumed. Without her medication, Frances acts with extreme violence against anyone around her, and in one scene, disables one of the adults in a fit of rage and keeps hitting until she's restrained.
- Frances doesn't know what her condition actually is, except that she has an uncontrollable temper when not heavily medicated. If questioned, she admits she can't remember her biological parents or what might have instigated her instability. In Frances' case, it's because the razide (in various forms) has been playing with her mind for years.

Clifford Pryce

A thief, a malcontent, and a follower, this boy is an inmate of St. Jude's because it was either that or get tried as an adult and sent to prison.

- Clifford rarely starts fights or carries out abuse on his own, preferring to follow someone like Isaac or Mo, and drive the boot in while giggling away. He may seem more approachable, or at least less overtly hostile than them, but he takes joy in the discomfort of others.
- One of the characters finds an item of worth missing, potentially even the device through which the angel communicates. Everyone blames Clifford, but for once he wasn't responsible for the theft. Choose another child who stole the item for sympathetic reasons, such as it reminded them of home, but Clifford defiantly refuses to say he didn't steal it.

Alia Johnson

A sneaky, sadistic girl, possibly the cruellest of all the children at St. Jude's. None of the other children know why she's there, but frequent rumours extend from her murdering animals to her sexually abusing other children. She's done so many awful things outside the facility, she doesn't recall which one she was penned in for.

- Where Isaac uses brutality on the other children, Alia is more likely to needle them socially, calling out their failings and humiliating them. She might literally use tools like needles, nails, hot tongs, and hair straighteners to fuck them up in horrible ways. She gets off on the pain.
- Alia disturbs everyone at St. Jude's, including the most ignorant of the adults. The razide is tempted to school her in becoming a cultist, but she seems to have no interest in serving the whims of a god or adult. In one scene, the PCs should witness one of the adults or other children shaking in a corner, horrified at something terrible Alia has done.

Oscar Bevois "Friendly"

As with many children at St. Jude's, Oscar has an awful story of suffering repeated abuse, which is compounded by the abuse he has then gone on to visit on other children.

- On the face of it, Oscar is one of the friendliest children in the facility, and will attempt to warm up the PCs to his presence. When he has gained the trust of one of them, he suggests they go somewhere private, where he attacks them and threatens to set Alia on them if they don't go along with it.
- Oscar knows all of St. Jude's hidden spots, having taken over a dozen children to hiding places to abuse. At one point he disappears, and is found hours later crying from behind a wall, where he's become stuck between two pipes. He offers to show the PCs how to get to the spot if they'll rescue him, but they may decide to keep him walled up.

Mo Rahman "Ox"

Prone to acts of nasty violence and bouts of obsessive protectiveness, Mo came to St. Jude's after breaking another boy's back, though he maintains it was unintentional. He suffered a brain injury as a younger child that doesn't allow him to moderate his "affection".

- Mo offers one of the PCs a place to sit in class or when dining. If declined, he tackles the PC and beats them while crying.
- Mo is one of few NPCs who might prevent a PC from taking abuse, even if he's in the entourage of Isaac or one of the other ringleaders. He'll only do this if previously shown kindness, but is an implacable bodyguard if used in this way.

OTHER RESIDENTS

- **David Jones**, sent to St. Jude's after taking the rap for his brother's drug dealing.
- **Jacqui McCann "McCunt"**, sent to St. Jude's for beating up her mother and sending her to the hospital.
- **Sam Forgeron "Shitter"**, sent to St. Jude's after defecating repeatedly around his school, home, and neighbourhood, and painting his room in his faeces.
- **Laura Skinner "Doxx"**, sent to St. Jude's after causing the suicide of another girl at her school following a long campaign of online stalking and abuse.
- **Rudolph Warren "Fugly"**, sent to St. Jude's after his parents dumped him on the side of the road and nobody would claim such an ugly boy from the orphanage.
- **Benita Theroux**, sent to St. Jude's after murdering a teacher who was abusing her.
- **Jim Hardy "Lardy"**, sent to St. Jude's due to his compulsive eating disorder.
- **Lana Jackson**, sent to St. Jude's after attempting to sabotage her abusive stepmother's car and cause an "accident".
- **Britt Waddington "Flash"**, sent to St. Jude's due to her repeatedly being caught exposing herself to other children.
- **Phil Palin**, sent to St. Jude's after holding another child down at school and branding a swastika into her forehead.

ST. JUDE'S LAYOUT

St. Jude's Center for Troubled Youths is a three-story, t-shaped building, which could easily serve as a school for 300 to 400 pupils if it were fully staffed, refurbished, and safe. However, the majority of St. Jude's is only half-constructed, the staff are barely a skeleton crew, and there are very few inmates. Dr. Crowe justifies this by saying the children on-site benefit from focused care and attention. In truth, the razide loves having a labyrinth at her disposal for children to get lost in, receive torments dozens of doors away in cavernous classrooms, and suffer the feeling of being in a cross between a factory and a prison.

Though much of St. Jude's lacks power, heating, furniture, or even doors, every window is barred or shuttered with metal plates, and every door to the outside is firmly locked unless the children are "enjoying" rec time in the concrete yard (under the watchful eye of security). Thankfully, each child has a bed to sleep in. However, the razide ensures the children are packed tightly, with 12 to a small dorm, ostensibly separated between boys and girls (though nobody enforces this). Keeping the children together fuels the possibility of continuous bullying and escalating fear, which is exactly what Inferno's servant wants.

Rooms of note are listed below:

Ground Floor

[1] The Main Hall is where children assemble for communal address by any of the St. Jude's staff. It is also a common crossing area when navigating from classroom to therapist's office, or chapel to rec room. The large double doors leading out have not been changed since their time as the factory's entrance, including the three great bolts across them and chain lock once used to keep thieves out. These locks now serve to keep the children in. The main hall bears an old smell of dust and smoke, and the floor is covered with scratches. Dr. Crowe says the marks are from chairs and tables being dragged across the wooden surface, but they're thin and impressed enough to be from fingernails, where children have been dragged from room to room.

[2] Dr. Crowe's Office is deep in the east wing of St. Jude's, and is notably the only room in the building to not have a barred window. The doctor keeps her office well-appointed with bookcases, a desk, books, and ornaments typical of a high-end therapist's office. There's no reclining chair or sofa for the patient, however, with the doctor benefiting from a comfortable chair and anyone visiting her expected to sit on a backless stool. When children visit Dr. Crowe, she spends most of her time writing down their issues and listening to them without looking at them. She wants to increase the feelings of isolation and neglect. The window looking outside is small and square, just wide enough for a child to fit through, though the view beyond it is of a sandy area none of the children can access by navigating around the center's perimeter. It acts as a gateway through to Inferno and a portal through which the razide communes with her peers. It's also a means of escape should the razide need to flee.

[3] Mr. Greep's Classroom is in the south wing and stinks of stale piss and cigarettes. Mr. Greep doesn't smell much better. The classroom bears few adornments beyond an outdated world map (that still has the Soviet Union and Rhodesia on it) and a blackboard. The classroom layout is old-fashioned with two children to a desk. Often, there are insufficient stools for all children, so one or two have to stand. Greep teaches in an incredibly dull, unengaging fashion, but lashes out in a fit of rage if he finds children talking or defacing St. Jude's property. He throws the blackboard eraser, his keys, and even stools across the classroom, before accosting the children with his fist or belt. The atmosphere in the class is one of barely suppressed hostility, with the heat often being unbearable due to lack of ventilation and proximity to the center's kitchen.

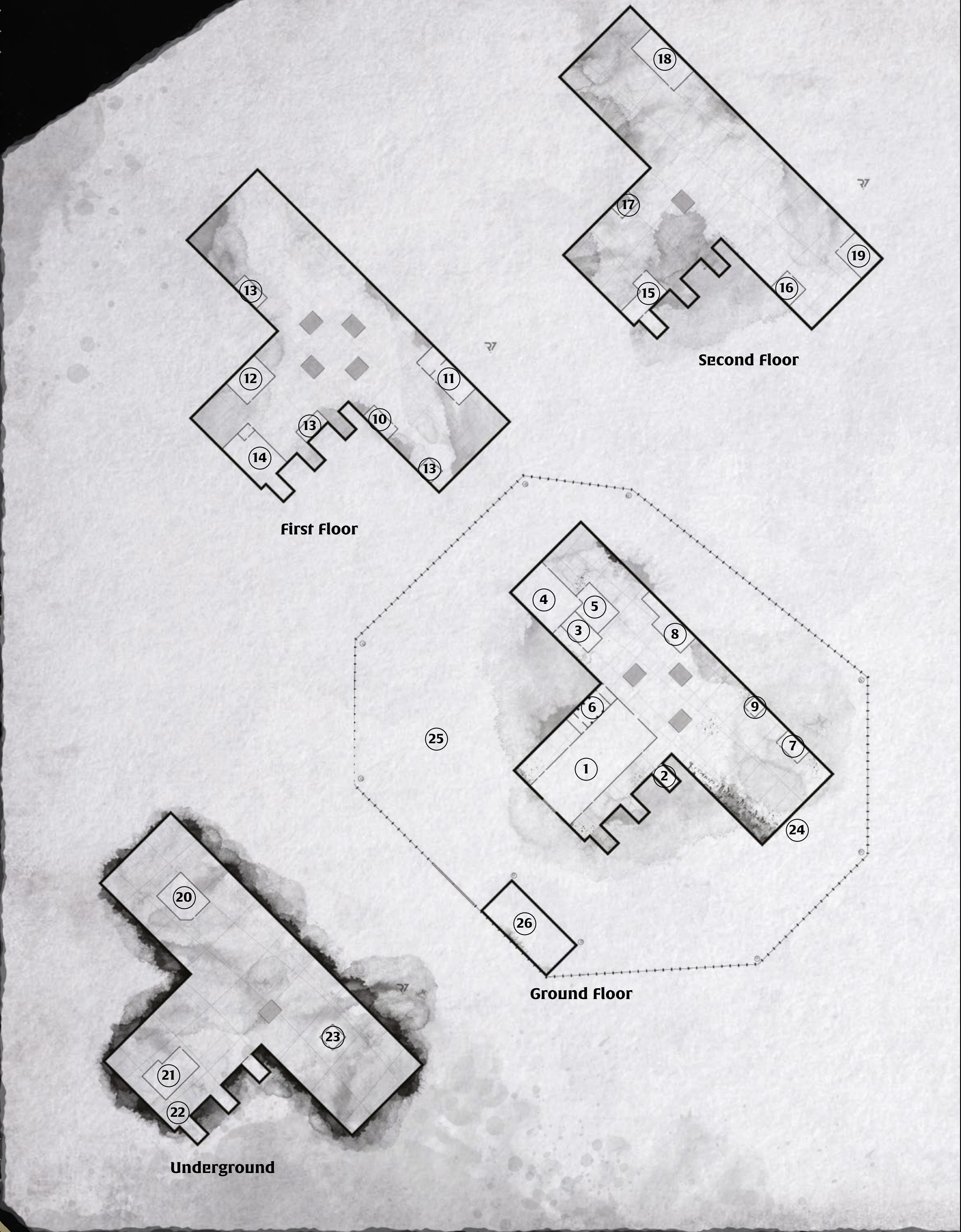
[4] The Dining Hall is in St. Jude's south wing, next to the kitchen. The dining hall has one of the most relaxed atmospheres of anywhere in the center, though it can turn on a dime when a fight breaks out, dinner or lunch is abruptly cancelled due to a child "playing up". There's no alternative available, so when food doesn't get served, children go hungry and staff head out to find a meal away from the center. Several long tables with benches along their sides make up the basic furniture in the hall, with children commonly clustering into groups of friends, isolating those without allies in the constant battle for social dominance. It's not uncommon for one inmate to steal the food of another or force them to eat something foul mixed in with their gravy. The heaters are always on in the dining hall, leading to the entire, spacious room feeling akin to a greenhouse.

[5] The Kitchen is behind the dining hall, and next to Mr. Greep's classroom. While its contents are rudimentary at best, it contains a sizable walk-in freezer. Nothing served at St. Jude's is fresh, all of it arriving at the center in marked freezer bags. Chris Speer isn't confident that the bags are always correctly labelled (the chicken is strangely hirsute, for instance) but he hasn't questioned it with the supplier who arrives with a van every two weeks. The walk-in freezer is so deep that Speer has lost track of what's at its rear. He takes to hanging the heaviest bags on meat hooks (which are never used for frozen carcasses, because that would imply something other than processed food), obscuring the nooks and crannies of this cavernous coolbox.

[6] The Chapel in the east wing is where Father Vogel spends the majority of his time, when he's not sitting in on lessons or otherwise pacing around St. Jude's in contemplation. Disturbingly, the chapel reeks of sex, sweaty bodies, and unwashed, moist skin. Anyone entering is hit in the face with the odour as soon as they open the ornate doors. All children must attend chapel each morning before classes and each evening before sleep, with Vogel reading popular bible passages and having them sing along to such hits as "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and "To be a Pilgrim" with little respite or change-up of the playlist. Vogel enjoys "counselling" children in private where possible, and has had a small confessional booth setup which comprises one chamber where he and the supplicant share a bench in tight quarters.

[7] The Rec Room in the north wing was possibly going to be a place of joy and respite for the children when Dr. Crowe initially commissioned its design, but then the razide took her and left the room unfinished, like much of the facility. Exposed wiring and even a couple of abandoned television sets litter this room, complete with incomplete puzzles, board games, and an outdated gaming console without games. Few people have legitimate cause to visit this room, which is why many of the worst abusers in the center use the rec room for their own forms of recreation, taking victims here to harm. There's no odour to this room, just a thin air and a quiet whine of electricity with nowhere to flow.

[8] The Showers in the south wing aren't demarcated for gender usage, so typically one inmate keeps watch as others get cleaned up, or just walks away if they want to invite trouble. These showers haven't been cleaned since being installed, leading to frequent blockages in the drains and water running a rusty brown. The showers thankfully have stalls, allowing for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Underground

some privacy, but those stalls are often used for all kinds of abuse. Chanara Franklin has the showers on her list of fixtures to mend, but Dr. Crowe and Father Vogel push her to clean up other areas as a priority.

[9] **The Walls** are accessible from a storage room in the north wing, where someone at some point bashed through the walls behind some pipes. Once inside the walls, the center becomes a maze of piping, vents, and claustrophobically tight spaces filled with dust, bugs, and protruding pieces of metal. This doesn't stop some of the children from using these places to hang out away from the adults, store contraband or stolen items from other inmates. In some cases, the worst bullies imprison their victims behind the walls, the only sign of their existence being the weeping echoing through the ducts.

First Floor

[10] **The Girls' Dorm** is located in the facility's north wing. It's a short and thin room, with bunkbeds allowing for a capacity of 12 children, though the beds are threadbare, springs protrude, and few gain a peaceful night's sleep. One child is appointed the dorm mother, responsible for ensuring nobody leaves their beds after dark, even when they need the bathroom. In the event a bladder or bowel movement can't be held, they either leave their bed and face the dorm mother's punishment, or foul their bed and have to clean it for themselves in the morning, between classes. The girls' dorm bears a metallic, bloody smell, which all the room's inhabitants have picked up on. There has never been an act of mass violence in this room, but Frances Coachman has developed a habit of storing used sanitary napkins in her pillowcase, contributing to the nasty smell.

[11] **The Boys' Dorm** is in St. Jude's north wing, but is more sizable than that of the girls' and even has ventilation through a series of ceiling-height windows that remain open at all times, despite how cold this sometimes makes the dorm. Like the girls' dorm, a boy is appointed dorm father, and some of the male inmates vie for this position in acts of violence. Sometimes they fight with fists, sometimes it comes down to who is sexually subjugating more of their fellow inmates.

[12] **Mrs. Edgewood's Classroom** is in the center's east wing, and unlike Mr. Greep's class, Edgewood's bears a veneer of charm. The inmates' artwork is glued to the walls in place of wallpaper and to cover holes in the masonry, children can sit one to a desk due to the room's size, and it even comes equipped with sufficient chairs for all pupils. What the classroom lacks, however, is natural light. For some reason, the window in this room was blocked up and this leaves the class lit by a dim strip-light hanging from the ceiling. Edgewood's classroom smells a little too sweet, like rotting flowers or an overabundance of cheap perfume sprayed to conceal a worse odour. It catches in the back of the throats of anyone who lingers there for a lengthy period of time, and has led to Mrs. Edgewood developing a hoarse cough.

[13] **Inmate Restrooms** are on this floor in each wing because when this facility was a factory, only the high-level employees above the workfloor had access to indoor toilets. Franklin does her best with keeping these restrooms clean, but many of the children take out their emotions by vandalizing the stalls, and she can't keep up with them. Many a horrid tale has emerged of a child nearly being drowned in a shit-filled toilet. To some, this is a form of hazing. The adults each turn a blind eye to such practices. Predictably, the stench of these restrooms is foul, penetrating the corridors and rooms surrounding them. Some children opt to use the showers or abandoned rooms elsewhere in the center instead of using these muck-ridden stalls.

[14] **The Staff Office** is a sizable room in the east wing, complete with comfortable chairs, a television, computer, and pool table. Some of the staff come back here to socialise, others spend time in here relaxing, blocking out the sounds of children roaming around the corridors outside. It's rare for a child to be allowed in the staff office, though those allowed in immediately feel nausea and resentment at the comparative luxury the adults at St. Jude's get to experience (even Speer and Franklin) while they're forced to live in squalor. This room smells of booze and cigarette smoke, with Mr. Greep keeping a couple of bottles of whiskey and vodka in a drawer, occasionally deigning to share them with other members of staff.

Second Floor

[15] **The Staff Quarters** are in the east wing, and serve as four bedrooms for any staff looking to stay the night at St. Jude's. Usually, the inhabitants are Father Vogel, Mr. Greep, and Mrs. Edgewood, with Dr. Crowe spending night-time in her office, Speer leaving the facility for the night, and Franklin sleeping in the maintenance room. These rooms resemble student rooms around a central kitchen area and a small bathroom accessible via the corridor outside. Though children rarely come here of their own accord, those who do notice none of the adults talk to each other in the staff quarters, bustling past as if they weren't even there.

[16] **The Memory Hole** was set up in the north wing by Dr. Crowe as a way of triggering painful memories among the inmates at St. Jude's. Photos of families, victims, and scenes of violence are pinned to the walls with contrasting items such as teddy bears and toy train tracks around the floor. The intended child age for the toys is immaterial to Dr. Crowe, who enjoys stirring emotional responses from her patients. Each child is expected to spend three hours a week in the memory hole, sometimes with music being blasted in to drown out their screams, or provoke them.

[17] **The Construction Area** could account for much of the second floor, but a specific section of it above the east wing is incredibly precarious, containing hanging live wires, loose flooring leading into abandoned rooms below, and there is heavy machinery hastily and carelessly stored away on the roof above, just waiting to fall through. This part of the center also contains a ladder leading up to the roof, but one must navigate past a series of hazards to get there. The razide is aware of this escape hatch and has done nothing to seal it up.

She believes the invitation of hope is a fantastic tool for crushing dreams, especially when the hope of freedom is quickly dashed.

[18] The Science Classroom above the south wing has never been used as a classroom, which is a pity, as it's one of the best-stocked parts of St. Jude's. Cupboards contain everything from tongs and goggles to Bunsen burners and soldering irons, but the intended science teacher never returned after their first day surveying the site, being replaced by Mrs. Edgewood with her more theoretical approach. This room is a treasure chest of weapons and torture implements, but so few children access this floor, not many know about it. The room smells polished and new, leaving a soreness in the sinuses for anyone remaining within for too long.

[19] The Tank contains the center's supply of water for showers, sinks, and toilets, gathered from the rain and supposedly filtered before reaching its destinations. Unfortunately, the tank's cap has been wide open for the last three months after a child who made it to the roof decided to open it to see what was inside. Since that time, it has become clogged with dead birds and according to Oscar Bevois, the body of his last girlfriend who tried to escape St. Jude's.

Underground

[20] The Boiler Room is an unlit, oil-slicked chamber beneath the south wing. The boiler hasn't been replaced, so it barely functions. When it is running, it grinds, moans, and shrieks, leading to many inmates hypothesizing that Chanara Franklin feeds unruly children into it. In truth, Franklin would love nothing more than to fix the boiler, but there's no budget to hire an engineer, leading to her patchwork repairs here and throughout the facility. Plus, it wasn't her who fed a child into the boiler, but Mr. Greep, who once hit a boy too hard and then had to dispose of the body. Even the razide is oblivious to this fact.

[21] The Maintenance Room is where Franklin spends much of her time when not fixing lighting, heating, and other functions around St. Jude's. This trash heap of a room is potentially harmful to anyone entering who isn't Franklin, as she knows the safest way around the maze of scrap metal, hanging tools, and broken furniture. She also wears heavy-duty overalls to prevent scratches from rusty nails sticking out all over the place. This room is beneath the main hall, but seems expansive enough to edge into the facility's wings. It looks like a serial killer's den, but is in fact one of the few places a human is unlikely to harm you. Franklin is mostly harmless, and the other staff steer clear.

[22] The Cells are, as the name implies, cells for troublesome factory employees. These rooms were only unearthed when Dr. Crowe repurposed St. Jude's. Franklin isn't even aware of them, as they're underneath the east wing of the center, accessible only via a staircase outside Dr. Crowe's office. The door leading to these stairs is locked, with Dr. Crowe as the only keyholder. There's no light or ventilation in this underground prison, and no sound escapes it. The razide-as-Crowe is happy to incarcerate any serious troublemakers before throwing away the key.

[23] The Hollow is a small section of the cellars, just beneath the north wing, where boys and girls sometimes go for private time. At its best, the hollow provides respite from abuse and a quiet place where the children can play or cry, lit by the single lightbulb dangling from its ceiling. At its worst, abusers like Isaac and Alia bring victims down here to torture, knowing the adults will never disturb them. The room is grey all around, with a threadbare rug on its floor and a stone staircase leading up to a closed door just outside the rec room.

Roof and Yard

[24] The Roof is only accessible via a ladder reaching up from the east wing's second floor. The building's roof is steepled, with a hatch opening on the western slope, which is a blind spot for the security station in the yard. Unfortunately, St. Jude's is not attached to any other building, so roof-running to freedom is not a possibility. Additionally, there's no ladder or staircase leading to the ground, offering only an uninviting 13 metre drop to the concrete below. Still, some inmates who attempted escape in the past have used this method, stringing together sheets or clothing as a makeshift rope. One hazard is in having to drop past the chapel window, where ill timing might result in Father Vogel witnessing the escape.

[25] The Yard is a desolate, concrete foundation with little to it beyond cracks and chalk etching where some creative inmates mark out goal-lines or grids for recreation time. Of course, the rain washes them away. A tall, chain-link fence surrounds the yard, and as is typical with prisons, bears coils of razor wire on top. Only one fence stands between the yard and theoretical freedom, however. The biggest obstacle is the security station at the yard's edge, near the gate.

[26] The Security Station is manned by a couple of lazy, vindictive former police officers who want an easy life but miss the thrill of being able to wave around their authority. If they ever see a child doing something even slightly strange in the yard, one will blow a whistle, point at the child, and the other security guard will wrestle that child to the ground, getting some blows in with fists or their truncheon. At night-time, one security guard sits in the station while the other patrols the building perimeter – an incredibly boring task. The guards aren't allowed to listen to music, use phones, or read books while on duty, increasing their tension and desire for violent release.

THREAT ESCALATION

Though It Started and Ended with Screams has a four-act structure, the majority of its scenes are suggestions depending on the topics the gamemaster and players wish to address. However, the threat in Screams should continue to escalate throughout, no matter the course the players choose to take. While the horror can be interrupted with rare scenes of calm or even humor, these act largely as preludes to further horror. Knowing when to push down on the gas and when to ease off is in part the GM's responsibility. Here's a simple breakdown of how to evoke threat through mood in each act, to keep things fresh while escalating the danger each time:

Act One

This act establishes mystery, familiarity, and even a little hope, rather than diving headfirst into the horror. Treat the first act as a way to introduce the players to the scenery and characters at St. Jude's, but primarily to introduce them to themselves. The bus journey to St. Jude's may even have a feeling of camaraderie and new friendship. When arriving at St. Jude's, the adults should seem kind and approachable, with the worst of the youths out-of-scene or not interacting with the PCs until later. Only as the PCs explore the facility for the first time, witness its rundown nature (despite being a recent build), and hear the abuse of other kids somewhere deep in the center, should real dread begin to creep in. Avoid inflicting any extreme horrors on the PCs at this point. All threats should come through anticipation.

Moods: Tension, curiosity, apprehension, and dread.

Act Two

The second act is where the mortal horrors of St. Jude's start to come through. Some scenes will be played as chronologically straight stories, such as lessons in class or dining room meals. Bullies torment the characters with threats and adults turn a blind eye to any abuse. The escalation here comes through the realization that no matter what happens to them, the PCs can do nothing to escape or resist the mortal abuses in this place. They certainly can't report them, with go-to figures such as Dr. Crowe and Father Vogel only exacerbating the situations. The act should swiftly turn into miserable slices of life, portraying the passage of time at St. Jude's, as abuses get worse, their will is ground down, and characters become resigned to their fates.

Note: torture without respite becomes boring or even harmful to players after a while. Try to keep this act short, and don't use it as an excuse to harm players out-of-character.

Moods: Sadness, fear, abandonment, and pain.

Act Three

In the third act, the threat escalates further, as PCs become subject to the vilest of abuses and the absolute wilful ignorance of the people who should be protecting them. This is the lowest ebb, where characters may try to escape the facility, preferring to face a life on the streets than another night at St. Jude's, or where they try to fight back, only to find themselves beaten down by abusers from among the other inmates at St. Jude's. In the second half of this act, the dynamic shifts as the PCs become the individuals capable of levying the threat against others. Slowly, they receive the offers of "heavenly" aid from the angel, allowing them to indulge in power fantasies and the possibilities of reprisals. After the torments of act two, this may come as a relief, except it should become apparent the power they're being given is out of their control and far more deadly than the angel implied.

Moods: Anger, power, vengeance, and screams.

Act Four

The threat reaches its explosive crescendo, as either the angel unleashes the tekron in an attempt to consume the facility and its inhabitants, or the razide grows fat on the despair of everyone at St. Jude's and sends the building sinking into Inferno. Until now, most of the harm the characters could experience might be superficial at best and traumatic at worst, but now death or worse – eternal servitude to the cogs of the Machine City or endless burning in the cages of Inferno – awaits them. The PCs can choose to fight back against either or both sides, sacrifice the lives of others to slow the fall of St. Jude's, and maybe, just maybe, get out of St. Jude's Center for Troubled Youths without losing themselves completely.

Moods: Panic, desperation, violence, and instinct-driven behaviour.

ACT ONE: ARRIVING AT ST. JUDE'S

The Bus Ride

The bus looks and feels like one of those big grey vehicles used for transporting prisoners. You're surprised to find no space for shackles to loop through a hole underneath your seat when you look, but the glass of the windows is definitely reinforced and there's a door between the passengers and the driver, keeping you all locked up tight as you make your way through the countryside and the city, picking up more and more kids as you go. A security guard sits next to the driver, but other than standing up to let children pass, he's not taken any action as yet. As the bus trundles along, your mind travels to how you earned yourself a place on a trip to St. Jude's Center for Troubled Youths.

This scene is where players should introduce their characters to each other. Some may wish to chat on the bus about St. Jude's, with the GM teasing a little information about this facility for wayward children being known as a place for "real hard cases". Others are going to want to take the quiet route, keeping their personal histories secret for now. If the players aren't interacting at all, the GM should introduce one or two NPCs to this scene from the inmate list provided earlier, but refrain from engaging in any violent actions.

Flit between the bus ride and the bus's surroundings as the players have a chance to play through their characters' flashbacks. Be sure to check whether the player characters already know each other, allowing such characters to share scenes where possible. If a flashback scene runs longer than five minutes, ask uninvolved players to play NPCs.

Note: This establishing scene may instil camaraderie or fear between the PCs, depending on how the flashbacks play out.

Bullying Begins

The bus comes to a halt in a part of the city you don't recognize. What you can see out the window is a police station and a hunched-over girl being walked to the bus by a couple of officers. She's all but thrown on board, with the security guard opening the interior passenger door so she can climb into the bus's main body, before closing and locking it behind her. This girl looks toughened, dull-eyed, and irritable. She immediately makes a beeline toward you.

The NPC joining the bus at this stage is Jacqui McCann, one of the inmates mentioned earlier in the scenario. Her purpose is to get in the face of one of the PCs, threaten them with harm, and say that once they reach St. Jude's, anything of the PC's belongs to her. She's not averse to starting a fight already, which the security guard takes some time to break up, but her main purpose is to show that not all the children on this trip are treating it like a holiday. Notably, Jacqui is a minor character who will in turn receive horrible abuse once she reaches St. Jude's, provoking a reaction of pity, sympathy, or satisfaction from her current victim when it happens.

Welcome to St. Jude's

The gates open ahead of the bus – tall, wire gates with what appears to be barbed wire coiled along its top edge. The great red and brown structure ahead of you could be a prison, a factory, or a slaughterhouse. What it most certainly doesn't resemble is a home for children. A guard within a station just inside the gate waves the bus on through before closing the gates behind it. You can't take your eyes from the large structure before you. "St. Jude's" is proudly emblazoned above its double doors, and it stretches some way both left and right, tall windows marked with bars to prevent break-ins, or perhaps break-outs. As the bus stops, the guard on board allows the driver to climb out and retrieve your bags from the luggage compartment, and once done, ushers each of you to leave one at a time.

The intent with this scene is to establish the sizable Center for Troubled Youths as oppressive and unappealing. As soon as all the children are off the bus and accounted for, the driver and guard climb back on and leave without any goodbyes. Nobody leaves the building to meet the new inmates, either. They're free to wander the barren, concrete grounds and even approach the security station, though doing so will see them threatened and told to go inside. When they finally do enter the building, Dr. Crowe is putting the last chair in place in the assembly hall, and tells everyone to put their coats on hooks before sitting.

Note: Dr. Crowe makes a point to address the first person into St. Jude's. She states *"Initiative is something we wish to foster here at St. Jude's. You used your initiative and opened the door. You stepped inside. It won't be the last time you need to make a decision like that. Always open the doors presented to you."*

Introduction

As those of you who arrived today make your way into the hall, with its polished wooden floor and high ceiling, you hear the voices of adults addressing you from the end of the room. A woman introduces herself as Dr. Crowe, the appointed therapist and counsellor for St. Jude's. A man named Father Vogel introduces himself and explains how everyone will attend chapel twice a day to receive the word of God and sing any sin away. Another pair, Mr. Greep and Mrs. Edgewood, are introduced as your teachers. Finally, a Mr. Speer is introduced as kitchen staff and a Ms. Franklin is introduced as the on-site maintenance worker. As they run through the facility's timetable for each of you, tell you where and when you'll be showering, eating, attending class, and sleeping, the feeling of being incarcerated mounts. Father Vogel reminds each of you that anyone attempting to leave the St. Jude's grounds without permission will be brought back by security or the police.

The GM can go into as much or as little detail as desired when it comes to the timetable, but it is worth hammering home the daily routine each inmate is expected to live by. Explain how each of the adults – perhaps with the exception of Greep – seems friendly, approachable, and interested in the children. This is the only day they'll be behaving like this so make sure the PCs have time to speak to a staff member one-on-one. It should come as a shock to the PC (but not the player) when the staff member refuses to intervene in their abuse (or makes it worse) later on.

Following the introduction in the assembly hall, children are paired off with existing inmates. This is a good time to introduce the PCs to the personalities of some of the more colourful characters at St. Jude's. Avoid outright violence at this stage as the children are shown around to the showers, dining hall, classrooms, dorms, and so forth, but emphasize the nastiness of a character like Alia Johnson or the sliminess of Dillon Poke. This is a good opportunity to use the descriptions in the Inmates and St. Jude's Layout sections of this scenario, with special focus on the odours and tastes of each room.

Hazing

One of the PCs is selected for hazing by existing inmates at St. Jude's, just as everyone is getting settled in. It requires them being separated from the rest of the group. This section doesn't bear a narrative description, as it depends on the characters the GM uses and the severity of the hazing in question. Keeping in mind the players' levels of comfort with what they're prepared to roleplay (be sure to reference the *Horror Contract*) inmates such as Isaac and Clifford might do any of the following to haze a new inmate of St. Jude's:

- Stealing the contents of their bag and flushing them, hiding them around the facility, or just taking them for their own.
- Stripping them on the ground floor and expecting them to walk back to the dorm, naked and humiliated.
- Dunking their head in one of the shit-soiled toilets to the point of almost drowning them.
- Beating them severely, but only below the collar, so bruises aren't immediately visible to any of the adults (not that the majority would care).

Other hazing rituals follow the worst kind of fraternity inductions, from physical torture, to eating vomit and faeces, to submitting to one of the whims of one of the older inmates. Again, the depths these rituals go to can be severe, and player comfort levels should be taken into account.

Any screams or cries for help are ignored among the adults at St. Jude's, though the other PCs might intervene, earning the ire of the Isaacs and Cliffords of the facility. If the event is reported to one of the adults, the majority adopt a serious look and say they'll deal with the matter urgently, even taking the perpetrators away for a good talking to, but they take no action beyond this. Repeat complaints are gaslit as "tale-telling."

Time to Dine

You assemble in the stark, stuffy dining hall and take your seats on the benches lining each long table. A solitary man works behind a long kitchen counter, preparing meals in what appears to be a pretty industrious process. Occasionally he points at a table and shouts "You! Come up!" and the children around this table go up to collect trays, into which he slops food in each tray compartment. Everyone takes plastic cutlery to carve through the mystery foodstuff.

This scene provides an occasion for characters to get to know other NPCs, such as Mo and Georgina, as well as to experience some of the cruelty of characters like Isaac and Alia, who spit in food, knock trays to the floor, or just generally crowd the newcomers.

This is a good opportunity for the characters to meet at least one sympathetic NPC and form some friendships and alliances, but for the most part the air in the dining hall should be hostile. This is the first time all the children will be around without any of the adults in charge (aside from Chris Speer, who just leaves if a fight starts). Give the PCs time to interact with each other and the NPCs to really establish personalities and allow factions to form.

Abuse in the Night

It's long past sundown when you hear a girl's cry for help from somewhere in the facility. It was hard enough to sleep before, but now it's going to be impossible with the pained screaming coming from somewhere in this vast building.

If the PCs get up from their beds, the girls find Jacqui McCann – their tormentor from the bus ride – missing, and a few of the other beds empty too. The GM should use Alia, Isaac, and Clifford for this, but can involve more characters, including the PC who got hazed, in this abuse if necessary.

No adults respond to Jacqui's screams from the rec room, where Alia and the other abusers are putting electric wires to her, beating her, and otherwise torturing her. If the PCs interrupt, the bullies quickly stop and leave while laughing at their recent activity, leaving the sobbing, brutalized Jacqui in the rec room and to the PCs' mercies. Depending on how they feel about her behaviour on the bus, their behaviour toward her may vary.

The purpose of this scene is to display the violence in St. Jude's and the fact that none of the adults care. If one of them is summoned from the staff quarters, they're angry and would rather berate the child interrupting their sleep than involve themselves in Jacqui's torture. If badgered sufficiently, the adult will stand outside the door of the rec room and shout "*Pack it in!*" before heading back to the staff quarters. It takes substantial attempts at convincing an adult to get them to break up the abusers and their victim, with only Franklin likely to stand between them.

Role Scenes

These scenes are tied to the Roles established in this scenario's introduction:

The Bully

- One of the NPC bullies attempts to enlist the PC to engage in some "petty" harassment, such as pantsing one of the other youths or squeezing all their toothpaste down the sink. If the PC goes along with this, the NPC then ups the ante, and asks the PC to swap the victim's medication around or set fire to their hair.
- This PC is invited to speak with Dr. Crowe on their first day at the center. Dr. Crowe asks the character to describe the act that resulted in their stay at St. Jude's, and says that they'll not be judged here for any abhorrent behaviour. Rather, they'll work on finding out the cause of the behaviour, and see if it can be more appropriately channelled. The session should feel like tacit encouragement, and while Crowe doesn't often look up at the bully as she's talking with them, the tone of her voice should occasionally allow for sighs of pleasure whenever the bully describes acts of violence.

The Damaged

- One of the NPCs whispers in this character's ear that *"Father Vogel is a demon in disguise and wants to turn us all into devils."* The GM can choose whether the whisperer is someone with insight into the malevolence in this place, but confused about the source, or if it's just a bully trying to create tension. This NPC can then disappear to heighten the paranoia.
- This PC is placed in the memory hole and presented with photos of their childhood while Dr. Crowe communicates with them via a speaker in the room. Occasionally the lights in this room switch colour and soothing music emerges from the speaker instead. At this time, Crowe isn't trying to push any new arrivals over the edge.

The Gaslit

- Father Vogel pays special attention to this PC, complimenting their voice and suggesting they lead the hymns the following day. He comments that he can be a good friend to them, and is overly affectionate, brushing his hand through their hair or resting his palm on their cheek as he speaks. The PC should feel that this man could be supportive but creepy, or predatory and manipulative.
- This PC has things stolen from their bag shortly after it's left in their dorm. An NPC can be seen with the stolen items very shortly after, proudly displaying the theft. None of the adults but Father Vogel see fit to intervene and retrieve the item, to win this PC's trust.

The Abandoned

- NPCs ignore this character at first, pointedly steering clear of engagement. Only when this character is alone in a corridor does Chanara Franklin approach and tell them *"things aren't going to be so bad forever. You might make some friends here to last a lifetime."* The maintenance worker gives the PC a bar of chocolate and carries on with her work.
- This PC is told they'll be helping Mr. Speer run the kitchen for dinner. Speer resents having to look after a child while he cooks, and is rude and aggressive whenever the character gets under foot. Eventually, Speer breaks and shouts *"Just stand in that fucking corner while I make everyone's dinner, okay?"* If the PC persists in trying to help, Speer deliberately spills hot soup over the character. If they instead attempt to engage Speer in conversation, trying to pacify him, he squats at the child's level and looks them in the eyes, before saying *"They put you in here to watch me. Well, you can tell them I ain't doing nothing wrong. Tell them that."*

The Plant

- Mrs. Edgewood, all smiles and kindness, tries to find out the cause for this PC being sent to St. Jude's. If it becomes apparent they're lying, she abruptly frowns and snaps at them that lying at St. Jude's will just get them punished. She makes a point of barging past the youth as she leaves the scene.
- One of the inmates stares at this PC and tells them confidently *"I know your secret"* and demanding a bribe to stay quiet. This is a bluff, which the PC should be able to determine by ***Reading a Person***, but the NPC then goes on to make up a lie about the PC, such as *"I saw them crying as soon as they were alone"* or *"I saw they somehow brought a mobile phone in with them."*

The Unfortunate

- Dr. Crowe sees this character for an appointment on their day of arrival, and feigns shock when they no doubt explain how they're here due to an error. Crowe tells the character she'll look into that immediately, but *"the tangled gears and wires of bureaucracy take time to unpick."* She tells the character they won't have to attend therapy like the rest of the children, knowing that by exempting this individual, they'll be on the receiving end of terrible bullying.
- On this character's first night, their bed collapses underneath them, and they find their leg badly cut by a spring. Dr. Crowe runs an infirmary out of her office, but isn't answering the door. The blood continues to flow unless the PC does something to address the wound.

ACT TWO: MOUNTING DREAD

Waking Up

You're woken by a shrill ringing throughout the Center for Troubled Youths. You can see the one in your dorm – a circular red device above the door, its hammer striking the bell repeatedly like a fire alarm. Based on the routine laid down yesterday, you know you're supposed to shower and then go directly to chapel before breakfast.

This scene introduces the PCs to the routine of waking, showering, praying, eating, class, eating, etc. and the grinding mundanity of it all. The first time the characters go through the following scenes should feel like an introduction to each part of the facility, but from the end of this act, the gamemaster should throw scenes like these at players randomly, both as full scenes for play and splices or scenes and montages. This is where the initial hell of St. Jude's sets in. Everyone here is hostile, nobody cares about your misery, and you quickly learn to keep your head down and finish the day, hoping to not draw the attention of people worse than you.

Bullying Begins Anew

You suddenly realise you've become separated from the rest of the children, except, there's a hurried sound of footsteps behind you. Before you can turn, you're shoved up against the wall. "You're going to do exactly what we tell you to do, or one of you is going to die tonight."

Select two of the PCs and have characters like Isaac and Mo drive them up against a wall as the rest of the children depart. The NPCs threaten to kill them if they don't act as the bullies' flunkies. Today, Isaac wants a fire started in Mr. Greep's classroom before the lessons start, with evidence pointing at Dillon due to his arsonist past. If the PCs fight back, Isaac runs, leaving Mo to fight the PCs without really knowing why. If they agree to start the fire, Isaac gives them a bottle of vodka, a rag, and a book of matches. Should they fail to do what he says, he might refrain from killing them that night, but he'll enlist Alia to cut up their wrists and thighs and make it look like self-harm.

Class with Greep

Mr. Greep is a slow, ponderous, and disinterested teacher. He's almost as dusty and lifeless as the classroom around him. Greep commands each of you to read from textbooks, which you're forced to share, one per two children. In a couple of cases, there are insufficient textbooks and children are forced to just listen. He drones on about the local city infrastructure and even talks about the site of St. Jude's, which used to be a workhouse, then a factory, and then became abandoned before it was reopened as this place. He starts regaling a bored class about how the bodies of countless orphans and women were discovered at the site some decades ago, but trails off, concluding "we don't indulge in sensationalist nonsense here. Turn to page 12 where we'll cover imports and exports."

If nobody sets fire to Greep's classroom based on the prior scene, they're forced to endure one of his lessons. This scene will see one of the NPC inmates tormenting at least one of the PCs to get them to cry out, perhaps by burning their hair, flicking ink cartridges at them, or biting them underneath the desk. Greep's drastic switch from disinterested to aggressive should come across as alarming, as he picks up his keys and flings them at the character that cried out, requiring the character to ***Avoid Harm*** (as Greep is very accurate). If they do dodge, he walks over and smacks the child across the head and tells them to *"Sit down and shut up!"* before the class continues.

This all acts as provocation for the abusers in class, who do more to force the PC to cry out further, knowing Greep has one hell of a temper and has beaten a child black and blue before now. This scene may well end with Greep picking the child up from their stool, throwing them against the wall, and kicking them in the ribs before saying *"Silence is golden, you little shit. Go to Dr. Crowe's office to get your ribs seen to."* If the child goes to Crowe's office, she doesn't answer the door, as she's currently administering her brand of therapy to another child.

Note: Mr. Greep cannot be provoked to discuss the matter of St. Jude's past any further, but he does leave his teacher's textbook on his desk, which contains more information on the area than that of the pupils' (each of which has pages torn out). The teacher's textbook explains how it's suspected up to a hundred people lost their lives working in this factory and were dumped in a pauper's grave now beneath the concrete.

Class with Edgewood

Mrs. Edgewood starts the lesson buoyant and excited about the subject at hand, but as she notices children talking over her, swiftly slumps into depressed disinterest. She murmurs "I'm only playing ball if you are," before taking out a novel, putting her feet up on the desk, and starting to read. Your eyes are drawn to the artwork around the room, apparently created by various children at the center. Some of it could be classed as disturbing, as it's clear troubled minds have poured their anxieties out onto the paper.

Mrs. Edgewood is here to claim a paycheck and get through the day with as little fuss as possible. She's self-centerd, so if a pupil shows an interest in her, she starts rattling on about her fictitious past (she doesn't offer the story of how she lost her teacher's licence) and what her holiday plans are for later in the year. Blithely ignorant to the suffering of the children around her, she says *"Aww, it can be tough in a new place, but you'll harden up"* if anyone complains of abuse. If any of the PCs are male and older teenagers, she shows more of a flirtatious interest with them.

Unlike in Greep's class, Edgewood doesn't react at all if a child is being physically bullied, choosing to turn away and address another pupil if possible, or bury her head in paperwork or her novel if not.

Late into the lesson, Edgewood orders one of the PCs to leave the classroom and return with art supplies from a cupboard on the same floor. She says it's clearly marked, but it isn't, leaving the PC to wander the corridors alone. At this point, the PC hears crying from one of the abandoned rooms on this floor, but finds no child there, and then hears the squeal and buzz of a radio tuning coming from within the walls.

Note: The angel's radio cannot be found at this early stage, but it's a good opportunity to emphasize some of the supernatural weirdness taking place in St. Jude's.

Counselling

Dr. Crowe gestures for you to sit on the uncomfortable stool as she takes her seat behind the desk, lounging back slightly before remembering herself and leaning forward to take out a notepad and pen. As she starts asking her questions, you can't help but stare out the window behind her: the first window you've seen in this place without bars. Sunlight streams through, and you see a sandy plot of land you didn't notice when you first arrived at St. Jude's.

This is the kind of scene the GM should revisit with the players again and again, and each time Crowe presses them with unkind questions that expose their mental wounds. She's attempting to push them to become just like the other sadistic inmates in this place, or as hollow as many of the adults. If a PC asks her *"How do I stop this bad stuff from happening to me?"* or words to that effect, she finally looks up from her paper and smiles. *"You fight back with worse than they're giving you. These youths don't understand what it is to be afraid. You need them to fear you. That's the only way they'll ever stop."*

The GM should occasionally show Dr. Crowe displaying sympathetic interest, or even bringing an abuser and their victim together to talk things out, but each time she turns the screw by trying to worsen the conflict

If characters have already attended the chapel a couple of times, Crowe asks at least one of them *"What do you make of all this talk of heaven and hell, honestly?"* and listens intently to their answer. She reminds them that both are a human construct, with hell only as painful as we allow it to be. If a PC shows particular interest in the idea of damnation, Crowe makes sure a knife finds its way to their belongings before the night comes, hoping they'll use it at a crucial moment.

Chapel Service

It's a strange thing to sing in a place as haunting as St. Jude's, but Father Vogel has everyone participating in a rendition of All Things Bright and Beautiful before heading into a service based around Doubting Thomas, and how one must not wait to see the truth to believe it, but have faith, because faith is more important than anything else. Like an evangelical preacher, he selects children from his congregation to tell their tales. He points at you, asking you to tell the congregants of a time you needed faith to get through something.

Vogel's intentions here are pure enough, in that he wants the children in his chapel joined in worship and discussing belief. What he ignorantly neglects to realise is that by selecting a child, he's pointing them out for abuse later in the night. Whatever they discuss comes back on them tenfold from the Alias and Cliffords of the center, probably making them regret opening up in a public space.

During the chapel service, Vogel suddenly collapses and starts seizing on the floor. None of the NPC inmates rush to aid him. If left to writhe and spasm, he knocks his head on one of the benches and passes out. The worst malcontents laugh at this before leaving the chapel. Anyone who helps Vogel up, or back to consciousness, has the confused priest muttering at them. *"That's never happened before. It was like something testing my soul. I should pray on this."* He has zero desire to speak with Dr. Crowe about it, and if pushed, screams *"She's a damn therapist, and that's not even a real doctor!"* before locking himself away.

Note: Vogel's seizures should occasionally manifest during the course of the story. Whether they're medical or based on the razide's presence in St. Jude's, is up to the GM. After three fits, Vogel bites through his tongue and can no longer speak. However, as if driven by an outside force, he continues to lead service by humming hymns and writing chapter and verse numbers of the bible on a board for children to read from. He never seeks medical aid for his condition.

Visitors from Outside

Tables and chairs have been assembled in the yard outside St. Jude's as the sun is beating down hot today, and you feel it's likely the staff here don't want visitors seeing the building interior. The gates open, and you spot some familiar faces filing in.

Place this scene at a point when at least a couple of the PCs are truly despairing. This is a time where visitors – in the form of parents, former guardians, court-appointed minders, or similar – come to see the PCs, or at least some of them. Keep in mind the characters' backstories, what they did to get here, and what their dark secrets are, as some may preclude visitors from making the journey.

At first, contact with the outside world should seem hopeful. The PCs are told how their siblings and friends are doing, how the house is tidy and dad has a new job, how the rest of the family are taking a trip away soon, etc. But turn that positivity into misery as it's apparent the family is doing perfectly well without the child there. In fact, they're doing better. When the PC starts complaining about life inside St. Jude's, turn even the warmest loved one into an apologist for the place, explaining *"You need to stay here until you can fit in outside"*, or *"I'm sure their methods are old-fashioned, but I went to a place like this, and it did me no harm."* If the PCs push the matter, asking their guardians to raise issues with Dr. Crowe or others, the visitor turns cold or angry and blames them for being here in the first place, before saying *"I'll visit again once you're settled in."*

Use these scenes sparingly, as glimmers of light that are often dashed. Sometimes they should be sprinkled with sweetness, but most of the time they offer false hope.

Use these scenes also to highlight the PCs and NPCs with nobody on the outside. They're also forced to spend time in the yard during the visits, made to bear witness to more whole families than the ones they have.

No Time for Sleep

Cries and shouts in the night are becoming commonplace now, but only the most cold-hearted individual could happily sleep through them. The screams are punctuated by the pounding, throbbing heating pipes running through the walls. As you hear a moan of pain, a dull "thump" echoes from within the building. It's as if St. Jude's is alive and responding to the torture of the individuals within.

The PCs are again confronted with the night-time abuse of one of the center's inhabitants. So far, none of them have been targeted, but one of the inmates who remains in bed to listen to the abuse turns to a PC and says, *"They're coming for you next, so you'd better find a weapon or make a deal, is all I'm saying."* The PCs can track the source of the screams to the hollow, where Isaac and Oscar are torturing Jim Hardy.

As ever, the abusers prefer to run away laughing over engaging in a stand-up fight with the PCs, but if the protagonists are determined to lay down a beating, Oscar begs and cries while Isaac picks up a rusty piece of metal and starts swinging it. Jim is in no state to assist in his own defence, or in taking revenge on his tormentors. If the PCs try to take him back to the dorm, he screams out and runs away toward the top floor. From there, he disappears. If the PCs are determined to follow, he's last seen squeezing into a hole in the wall. Come the morning, none of the adults except Crowe are aware of where Hardy went, with some even acting concerned about the missing child's whereabouts. Dr. Crowe ultimately reassures the staff that he hurt himself the night before, and was taken to an out-of-town hospital.

Note: Jim Hardy is absorbed into the building and will never be seen again. The angel controls the machinery, the engineering, the pipes and the wires of St. Jude's, while the razide influences the people. Jim made the mistake of crawling into a pipe to hide, and was quietly consumed by the Machine City's tendrils.

The Routine Sets In

This isn't a new scene as much as it is an emphasis to revisit scenes from this point. Depending on how long you want It Started and Ended with Screams to run, this is where relationships with other inmates develop, where PCs might crack the armor of adults like Edgewood and Speer, or where characters might devise an elaborate escape plot. As mentioned earlier in the scenario, escape at this point is certainly possible, but should come with betrayal, humiliation, and a return to St. Jude's if this scenario is to run its course.

GMs are advised to continue hinting at the supernatural aspects of St. Jude's, from the way the building groans when the inmates feel pain and fear, to the pointed ignorance on display from the adults. Some of that comes down to coincidence, some to basic human nature being selfish and cruel, but everything feels the insidious poison of the angel and razide's battle for this site and the people within it.

The ante increases with the next act. Until then, keep building the dread.

Role Scenes

These scenes are tied to the Roles established in this scenario's introduction:

The Bully

- This PC is encouraged by Alia to engage in some nastiness with one of the other inmates. Alia gives the PC a cigarette lighter and some thin metal rods and encourages the character to heat them up and press them into someone they find particularly irritating. She even offers to hold a victim down. Alia's not looking for a kindred spirit, but someone who she can manipulate and terrorise into doing the same kind of things she's into. She wants to foster a communal guilt, so nobody can report on each other without also admitting to their role in the abuse.
- Mr. Greep drops his armful of paperwork as he passes this PC, with some of it sliding under a door into an abandoned room. After swearing loudly, he blames the character for bumping into him, and tells him to recover his papers and bring them to the classroom. Greep then storms off. The PC might ignore Greep, or could enter the unlocked room. If they enter, they're greeted with a psychedelic view of writhing cables, blinking electronic eyes, and buzzing red lights. There's no other room in the center quite like this. The eyes turn on the PC and an electronic voice whispers *"Justice"* before the character finds themselves falling backward into the corridor. The door slams shut. If they reopen it, the room is an abandoned storeroom with a great hole in the floor. All signs of interference from Metropolis vanish, but so do Mr. Greep's papers.

The Damaged

- Dr. Crowe spends some one-on-one time with this character, inviting them to walk around the yard in the fresh air as they talk about their problems. Crowe advises befriending one of the other inmates, suggesting someone completely unsuited to the task, such as Oscar Bevois. Crowe even offers to set the two of them up in the rec room, and give them time to spruce the room up and form an effective team. Such an experience is unlikely to go well for the PC.
- This character starts suffering vivid nightmares, wetting the bed and crying out in their sleep, both of which earn the mocking laughter of several of their fellow inmates. The nightmares are not of their time before St. Jude's, however, but of a great metallic spider chewing them up from their toes to their waist, all while Dr. Crowe laughs, repeating the phrase *"The house always wins."*

The Gaslit

- Vogel moves up the manipulation and abuse of this character, but fails to admit that his actions are anything other than "care", even chastising the PC if they object or call the frequent touching and alone time as abuse. Vogel arrives at the dorm one night, just before lights-out, to tell this character they're needed in the chapel to arrange things ahead of the morning. He doesn't make it out to be a choice, but becomes flustered if multiple children offer to come. If he gets the PC alone, he makes a move to kiss them. If threatened, he backs away immediately and tells them *"You led me on, you little devil. If you utter a word of this to anyone, I'll make sure you spend the rest of your life in places like this."* During the next instance where Vogel attempts this, he again seizes and starts foaming at the mouth.
- There's a single working phone in St. Jude's, located in in the staff quarters. During the day, one of the adults comes to this character to tell them they have a call from their family, even if they don't have one. The child is escorted to the staff quarters and the adult watches as they take the call. The voice on the other end isn't anyone they know, sounding strangely automated and high-pitched. It tells the character *"There's a way out for you and your friends. Stay strong. I'm watching you. I'll end this pain soon enough. Don't believe a word Dr. Crowe tells you."* They then hang up.

The Abandoned

- Mo Rahman develops an affection for this character for apparently no reason, giving them his share of food at lunch and dinner without a word. If Mo is questioned, he frowns and looks away. If the character doesn't eat the food, a switch in Mo's head flicks on, and he attempts to awkwardly spoon-feed the PC, ordering *"You will eat it! I brought it for you!"* Mo's been hearing the angel's whispers, and the agent of Metropolis has been encouraging him to bring this character more closely into the fold with the other children. Mo doesn't realise the source of the whispers, however.
- This character is the last one out of class, the showers, or the bathroom, and finds the door locked and nobody is able to hear their shouts. In a very physical way, the walls start closing in, bashing furniture into the PC or sloshing them with dirty toilet water, all as a voice echoes in their head *"Go into the walls. The walls are safe. Go into the walls. The walls are safe."* If the character bashes a hole in one of the thin walls, they can climb through to safety. If not, they're tightly compressed, all the furniture crushed, before with a blink the walls reset. Any furnishings remain destroyed and this character is likely to receive the blame.

The Plant

- After a visit or two with their handler on the outside, a new individual comes to see this PC on visitor's day, explaining the previous handler had to take an unscheduled leave of absence and nobody would be coming to visit for the next few weeks. This individual is surprisingly sympathetic to any distress the child exhibits, but blames bureaucracy for keeping their hands tied and unable to pull them from St. Jude's. They just don't have the paperwork to extract the child. Right now, everything written down justifies their place in the institution.
- Frances Coachman, in one of her rare breaks from medically induced catatonia, asks this character if they'd like to take a walk to a hidden part of St. Jude's. If they agree, the perpetually dazed Frances walks the character to the construction area, and points up to the ladder leading to the roof. She murmurs that escape won't be possible for much longer, before abandoning the character and returning to her bed. If the PC doesn't keep up with Frances, Dr. Crowe intercepts them, and asks what they're doing away from their designated area. Crowe is persistent in trying to get an answer from this character, before laughing and letting them go.

The Unfortunate

- Chanara Franklin tries to get this character's attention during a break period and in an attempt to befriend them, lets slip a small piece of advice. *"If you ever need a place to hang, away from the kids, the maintenance room is always out of sight."* Though she's just offering friendly advice, it could be interpreted as predatory (not a bad call, given the other individuals in St. Jude's), and is actually giving good advice for evading the razide. For some reason, Franklin's room has become a blind spot for Dr. Crowe. Sadly, not so much for the tekron, should it be released in a later act.
- The character wakes up in the night with their chest wet, and sees Dillon standing over them with a lit match. **Avoid Harm** to roll out of bed before the match hits their body. If they evade the match, they find they're not doused in anything flammable, so they could interpret the act as Dillon just intimidating them. However, if the match does connect, the liquid bursts into flame that consumes the character's bedding and chest. It still wasn't flammable liquid, but Dillon has supernatural ways of making fires spread. He just stands there and watches as the character burns and others try to help.

ACT THREE: LIFEBOAT

Dragged Away

You're awoken with a hand clamped over your mouth and your arms and legs gripped by at least two other people. You find yourself dragged from your bed and carried by these chucklefucks, and you can only anticipate with dread what they've got planned for you. You're being taken downstairs, but to where?

This scene is one the GM definitely needs to gauge carefully, depending on player comfort levels. Things have been traumatic up to this point, and this scene stands the chance of pushing things too far.

The NPC inmates carry one of the characters to a storage room in the north wing, ground floor, where they intend to torture and abuse the character. This scene can last as long as the GM and players see fit, with any having the opportunity to call time on it. Involve NPCs such as Isaac, Oscar, Clifford, and Alia, but have some of them balking at the kinds of things Alia has planned.

When the scene is coming to a close, either through player or GM request, because the character is fighting back with enough ferocity to drive the abusers away, because they've suffered sufficiently to satisfy Alia and her cohorts, because Chanara Franklin calls from further down the corridor to query all the noise, or because the other PCs track their friend and intervene, the next scene starts.

Note: Be careful with this scene. We deliberately avoid going into detail of what a PC and their player can endure because this is best judged by the GM and players at the table. Never be afraid to cut to black or stop a scene of abuse before it begins by jumping to the next one.

Voice in the Walls

From out of the vent in the wall, you hear a tinny voice. *"Hey. Hey. It's okay. Don't cry. I can see you. I heard everything that happened. I'm so sorry I couldn't intervene, but I'm trapped back here. Don't be afraid. It's okay. I'm here to help. There's been too much suffering. It's time to end this. If you want some justice, want to punish the people who have done this to you, assemble your friends and come back here tonight. Got that?"*

The angel makes his move immediately following the last scene, hinting at a way out of this dire situation if the PCs can come together and serve Metropolis, though he doesn't phrase it exactly that way. If the PC investigates the ventilation shaft, they find nobody within. Likewise, there's a hole in the wall in this room that allows the characters to access the labyrinthine corridors winding within the walls. If they decide to enter prematurely, the next scene takes place.

Glimpses of the Other Side

The walls are as tight as a vice around your chest, the pipes billowing steam and exuding noxious fumes, the jagged pieces of metal in the walls scratching your skin as cobweb after cobweb settles in your hair and on your face. You think you've stood on a nail as a stabbing pain shoots through your foot. A cockroach crawls down your hand and up your sleeve, but there's no room to shift it. As panic sets in, you see the gap between the walls expand out into a vista of pipes, pistons, and heavy machinery, and you know instinctively that you're no longer in St. Jude's.

The labyrinth takes the PCs to the Machine City in Metropolis if they continue to crawl through it. Characters may be harmed physically or psychologically by this twisted journey. Additionally, the sight of the bizarre Machine City stretching out ahead of them is enough to set any individual to the brink of instability.

This scene is an awakening. It tells the characters there's more to this world than the breadth of their experiences, and they can reach out and touch somewhere truly alien.

Fight Fire with Fire

Dr. Crowe sits you down and for possibly the first time, maintains eye contact with you for longer than ten seconds. She smiles before taking your hand, stroking it gently. "I'm sorry you've found St. Jude's such a horrendous experience. Might I suggest that you're approaching this center with the wrong attitude? Those who behave as victims inevitably fall into victimhood time and again. That's no secret. My suggestion, not just as your therapist and counsellor, but as a surrogate mother for everyone in this facility, is that you need to start fighting fire with fire." She leans in. "Find the child who causes you the most pain, and show them what it feels like. Do unto them, as they do unto you. I'm sure Father Vogel would agree."

This scene takes place after the night's torments, as the routine appears to return to normal in advance of The Deal. Dr. Crowe seeks out the victim of abuse from Dragged Away, intent on turning the victim into a weapon.

The razide is aware the abuse is coming to a head and wants to push the children into unstoppable violence. In her mind, this should finally gain Sathariel's attention, and maybe push the entire facility into Inferno.

If the PC refuses Dr. Crowe's advice, Crowe slaps them across the face and tells them to *"Wake up!"* before putting a knife in their hand and locking eyes once more. *"This is your chance. Fight back. Stop being a victim all your life."*

It's possible the PC lashes out at Crowe, the ostensibly responsible adult. Crowe doesn't try to avoid a knife blow, imitating shock and then death before rising to her feet after the PC departs. This is exactly the kind of thing Crowe wants to provoke.

The Deal

The storeroom from last night looks much as it did before, but now the grate on the ventilation shaft is laying on the floor beneath it. It's just wide enough for one of you to crawl into.

If the PCs take the angel's advice and return in the night, they find a small, wind-up radio deep in the ventilation shaft. A crackling, whining voice emerges from within.

"I'm sorry I can't be there with you in person. I'm sorry about everything all of you are going through. The good news is I know the best way to get some justice for your situation. It's not through the mortal courts, through the adults at your facility, or through therapy. It's through retribution: clean, just violence. Crowe will tell you to torture the other children, but that just feeds into her desire for pain. I suggest a clean slate. Wipe it clean. I need blood, but there need be no pain. Feed me blood, and this entire episode will come to a rapid close."

If the PCs ask the voice who he is, who he's working for, or why he can't come in person, he responds as follows.

"By now you should have realised St. Jude's is more than just an ordinary place. It's on a ledge between heaven and hell, and I'm an angel of heaven. We can't come to St. Jude's in person, but I can lend you the strength of my arm, the fire of my sword, and the flight of my wings, if you can but bring the worst of your tormentors to justice for me. Then, your life returns to normal. No more of this hell."

The angel is lying, but there's enough truth in what he's saying to perhaps prove convincing. He emphasises again that they must kill their worst tormentor or tormentors in whatever way they deem fit, and it must be tonight. If they do it, he will deliver them from St. Jude's. His final condition is as follows:

"I can watch and hear everything you do and go through, but I cannot offer my aid unless a part of you takes part in the deliverance of justice. If you have a special teddy bear, a bottle of pills, a photo of your mother... Whatever your icon, it must rest on the corpse of your tormentor for me to take strength. This is the deal. You do this, and St. Jude's falls."

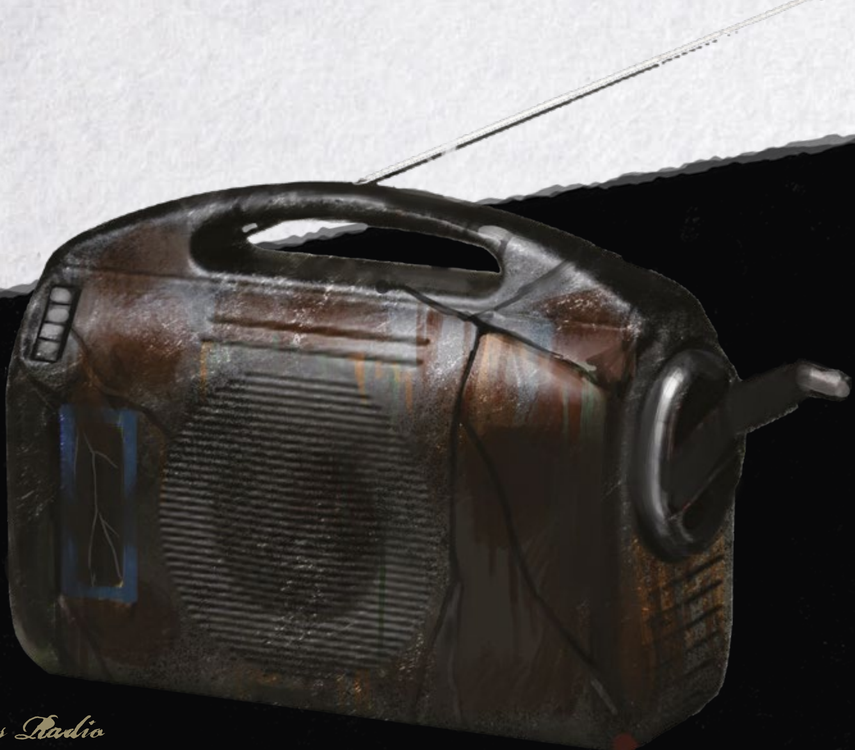
The angel claims the PCs will be safe no matter what, but again, this isn't true. The sacrifice allows the angel to summon a tekron, which will uncontrollably run a rampage around St. Jude's until everything organic has been obliterated and the building becomes a mesh of cogs, wires, and cables.

Note: This pivotal scene has a few optional extras. If the NPC inmates have been well-established, have some of them follow the PCs to their rendezvous with the angel's voice. They can threaten, beg to be a part of the deal, or even try to smash the radio, depending on the NPCs involved.

If the PCs aren't inclined to visit the storeroom again to retrieve the radio, the angel can simply whisper to them through vents and holes in the walls. The benefit of the radio is it allows the angel to follow them wherever they go, acting as a permanent voice of support in their hands.

The PCs may opt to go to Dr. Crowe about all of this. If they do, she abandons the PCs to tell Alia, Isaac, and any of the other cruel children that it's time to take the gloves off and cause some screams. Crowe moves her timetable forward if she knows the angel's about to act. Additionally, Crowe sheds her human skin before the PCs, before hounding them as a razide. Not even her most devoted NPC disciples might remain unshaken in her presence.

Of the other adults, Chanara Franklin is the only one to take the PCs seriously. Sadly, her response isn't to protect them, but to flee the facility. She attempts to take the doors, but finding them locked, makes her way to the construction area and climbs onto the roof. She has no way of getting down safely, so whether she plummets and ignominiously breaks her neck, or stays up on the roof as the next act takes place, is up to the GM.



The Angel's Radio

Role Scenes

The angel speaks to the characters through the radio if they have it, or more situationally, via ducts and holes in the wall. Typically, he approaches them when they're alone:

The Bully

- This character's normal sponsor among the inmates doesn't approach in this scene, but Dr. Crowe does. She sees in this PC the possibility of a disciple similar to Alia Johnson, and after inviting this character to her office, asks candidly *"With the promise of no judgement for your speaking honestly, what brings you the greatest pleasure?"* Whatever the response, she does what she can to facilitate the bully's satisfaction, under the promise that *"If things ever heat up in here, you remember how good I've been to you, sweetheart."*
- The angel speaks words of wisdom to the bully. "You know what you do to those other children is cruel. It's time to atone. Make your life and their lives better. You weren't always this way. There are youths here worse than you. Cut a throat and make amends." The angel is more than capable of dropping a weapon into the bully's hands.

The Damaged

- After their recent interaction with Oscar, the character may be pleased to hear him crying from within the walls. He's unreachable from this PC's current location, but begs for them to help him out as he's all tangled in cables, and they're squeezing his arms, legs, and neck incredibly tightly. The GM should stress that while Oscar's pleas are disturbing, there's something satisfying about hearing him scared. If the PC does access the room behind the walls, there's no sign of Oscar, who shows up perfectly normal shortly after. He has no memory of the incident and no marks from it either, because it was all an attempt by the angel to manipulate the character.
- This character spots Chanara Franklin tinkering with what looks like a miniature remote-controlled spider on her lunch break in the yard. It strongly resembles the giant metallic spider from the PC's dreams. Franklin explains she found some old blueprints stuck behind the boiler, and has no idea of the intended scale for this device, but it appears to function.

The Gaslit

- Vogel's paranoia regarding what this character might say about his behaviour leads to him reporting them to Crowe for inappropriate actions with other children. Crowe calls the PC to her office with Vogel standing in attendance, and coolly reads off a statement. *"Based on you showing deplorable behaviour with the other children and adults in this facility, I have no choice but to recommend you stay here for an additional year. I can tell you now the courts are likely to take my word on this. Do you have anything you'd like me to add?"* Crowe can barely conceal her amusement, while Vogel looks very awkward during proceedings; his eyes flicking between the character, Crowe, the statement, and the floor.
- Alia Johnson pins this character in a restroom cubicle, and close enough to bite her, whispers urgently. *"I wasn't always like this. Crowe made me this way. Please. You've got to help me. If a bunch of us take out Crowe, we could all get out of here."* Whether or not Alia is lying is up to the GM. She will, however, help the PC form a small militia of children before vanishing into a corner of the facility.

The Abandoned

- Father Vogel asks this character to deliver an envelope of reports to Mrs. Edgewood's class. The contents are all thoroughly mundane (though Vogel's preference for certain children is clear), but the envelope isn't the important issue in this scene. When the PC arrives at Edgewood's class, they hear what sounds like pained moaning from within. They could flee, or even slip the envelope under the door, with the moaning continuing in their wake. If they open the door, they find Greep fucking Edgewood over a desk. Despite the sounds from both parties, they appear to be engaging consensually. Greep sees the child first and shouts out *"Fucking peeping tom!"* before extracting himself and chasing after the youth with trousers around his ankles. This moment could be played for humour or horror, depending on this character's origins and experiences at St. Jude's. To emphasize that it's not all laughs, Greep calls down the corridor *"I saw your face, kid! You're dead!"*
- The angel speaks kindly to the abandoned PC. *"These other children are your friends, but the ones who hurt you, and the cruel adults here: they would see you alone again. You never need to be alone again if you stop the torment. Just shed the blood, place the icon, and you'll be with your friends forever."* A fire-axe hangs on the wall near the PC, completely unnoticed until now.

The Plant

- Isaac Hill confronts this PC, twisting their arm behind their back or ramming their head into a wall, before spitting *"Guess what letter got delivered to me today, rat? Looks like you're due to send a report on all the goings-on here and then you can go home! Looks like you don't even belong here! Well, you're not sending any-fucking-thing."* Isaac will try to break this character's fingers and wrists with a hammer. Dr. Crowe ensured the letter from the outside world got to Isaac instead of its intended recipient.
- This character finds themselves looking out through the barred window of a classroom or bathroom, and notices the number of security outside have increased in number. In truth, they're anticipating a breakout based on information the angel leaked. The angel wants the entire facility scrubbed in a wave of justice, and his Archon will not tolerate loose ends. Even the adults are unaware of why ten or so guards are now hanging around the security station, Crowe's particularly alarmed by this uncalled-for human presence.

The Unfortunate

- Dillon hands this character a note before scurrying off to his own private corner in the facility. The note reads *"Sorry I tried to set you on fire. I can't help it sometimes. Stay away from me and find a way out. Soon, I'm going to set this whole place ablaze."* Dillon means it too. For once, most of the staff take the warning seriously, segregating Dillon from the other pupils and removing his clothes and any objects from his person. Unfortunately for them, he can still start fires with his mind, and will do so starting at the ground floor as St. Jude's falls in the next act.

- The angel whispers warmly to the unfortunate PC. *"You've had bad luck all your life. It's time to earn yourself some good fortune. I'm offering you a way out. Take a life, the life of someone here who contributed to your misery, and I'll make sure nothing bad ever happens to you again. I'll be your guardian angel."* The angel is almost laughing as he concludes, and this should be roleplayed. He just wants the sacrifice made, and will make any promise necessary to get the blood sacrifice performed.

ACT FOUR: ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE

The Sacrifice / The Torture

You feel the entirety of St. Jude's Center for Troubled Youths heat up as the pipes in the walls, the boiler in the cellar, and the electricity all around start humming with renewed power. There's a sudden snap as all the lights blow and countless fuses pop. Electronic doors and windows default to the locked position. The facility is plunged into darkness.

This scene is contingent on one of the characters performing the angel's requested sacrifice or the razide's requested torture. One wishes the characters to pursue the cause of carceral "justice," the other wishes for the characters to become just as vile as their abusers. Whatever choice they make, the power dies and new screams start emerging from all around the facility.

Note: If the characters refuse to play the games of either the angel or the razide, the two have different tactics. The angel dispatches one of the minor NPC inmates to execute one of the PCs, uttering the words *"You knew what was happening to me and did nothing."* This could force the PC to kill to defend themselves, which still satisfies the angel, or simply die, which also satisfies the angel. The razide dispatches Alia, Isaac, and others to fill the center with screams and wails, undeniable even to the most ignorant of the staff.

Lights Out

Plunged into absolute darkness, the innate hostility within St. Jude's Center for Troubled Youths explodes into violence. You know about all the vicious children here, all the abusive adults, all the holes in the floors and exposed wiring. But at least before now, you could see them. From some quarters you hear laughter, but then, the screaming starts. It's more violent and desperate than ever before.

Use this scene to put a focus on the terror of having to navigate such an aggressive environment without sight, relying only on touch and trust. PCs should feel breath on their necks, hands groping them, and hear pleas for help from rooms they can't access. The light from outside is minimal and remaining as a large group is a poor idea.

All this is interrupted by the smell of smoke emerging from the ground floor. Something is burning. Remind the PCs that when Dillon was taken away (if that scene played out), he was locked up in an empty room on the top floor, so surely he can't have started the fire.

Of course, he could have, and did.

Note: Play with sensory fear in this scene. You may have noticed that this scenario doesn't encourage use of music, mood lighting, or sound effects. That changes here for abrupt effect. If your players are happy with it, make the room as dark as possible, or if playing online, make everyone turn off their cameras and have only your microphones running.

The Infernal Descent Begins

At first, the voices you hear crying out belong to the children and adults you know. Then, more voices join the choir. Wailing, pained torment, stretching back over a century. A chorus of voices all suffering, all awakened because of the horrors perpetrated in this horrific place. At last, you see shadows from flickering lights up ahead. Perhaps they lead to an exit.

If the PCs served the razide's whims and added a new scream to the infernal choir of St. Jude's, they discover the main hall lit by candlelight, Dr. Crowe igniting each candle with a long wick. She still doesn't look the children in the eyes as she concludes her work, the air filling with smoke from elsewhere in the facility.

"We can stop pretending now. We can stop being brave. You can start embracing your fear." Her skin tears down the middle in a jagged line. A bulbous, red and black-streaked figure, coated in barbs and hooks, hulks and roars as she charges toward you.

The razide wishes to terrify the PCs, force them to commit desperate acts, throw their companions in her path, and with their fear, send St. Jude's straight down into Inferno. Whenever the characters act selfishly, the grounds of the center shift violently, as if the building is sinking into the earth. The fire accompanying the fall isn't Inferno, but Dillon's arson.

The PCs will be mostly unarmed, incapable of fighting this demon, and must survive based on wits or their ability to escape the facility, though neither is guaranteed. Make use of the various locations and NPCs in St. Jude's, incorporate brief flashbacks to give hints as to escape routes through the walls and the roof, and the safety of the maintenance room, but always state how it might be possible to slow the razide down if she just had a child to feast on.

Notably, children the razide designated as disciples (possibly including Isaac, Alia, Oscar, and others) serve the new form of Dr. Crowe willingly and attempt to draw out the PCs' suffering by hounding them around St. Jude's.

The Machine City Engulfs Us

A blast of whirring, clanking, and roaring, followed by a rapid burst of electricity that makes all the lightbulbs illuminate and then explode, tells you your sacrifice has had some kind of effect. You don't have long to contemplate it, as the sound of barrelling feet somewhere on another floor precedes another roar and a group of terrified screams. Even in this darkness, you can make out the horrifying sight of hundreds of wires and cables snaking their way across the ceilings and walls, as if wreathing this institution from the inside.

If the PCs did as the angel asked, tendrils of Metropolis pull St. Jude's apart from the inside, the tekron unleashed from within the walls, an amalgamation of flesh, plastic, and metal, resembling a hideous giant spider bristling with spikes, shards, and teeth.

The angel is true to his word, for a while. The tekron charges after anyone who made the PCs' lives a misery, but isn't a simple creature that remains on a leash. The PCs should witness the terrible creature goring and devouring chunks of other children and members of staff before it turns on them.

It's unlikely mostly unarmed children stand a chance against the tekron, though it's possible to outsmart it, lure it away from specified locations, or play matador and attempt to steer its clambering, crashing form into breaking through an outer wall, window, or the main doors. ***Observing the Situation*** might enlighten the characters to this possibility, but is not obligatory.

Unlike the option for infernal descent, where their choices lead to the facility's collapse, they've already made a pact that guarantees St. Jude's collapse. The question for them is whether they remain within as it happens. The GM should have the PCs contend with collapsing walls, floors, and ceilings as well as the threat of the tekron. The only mercy comes via the human inhabitants in this scene, who just try to stay alive.

The Cowardice of Adulthood

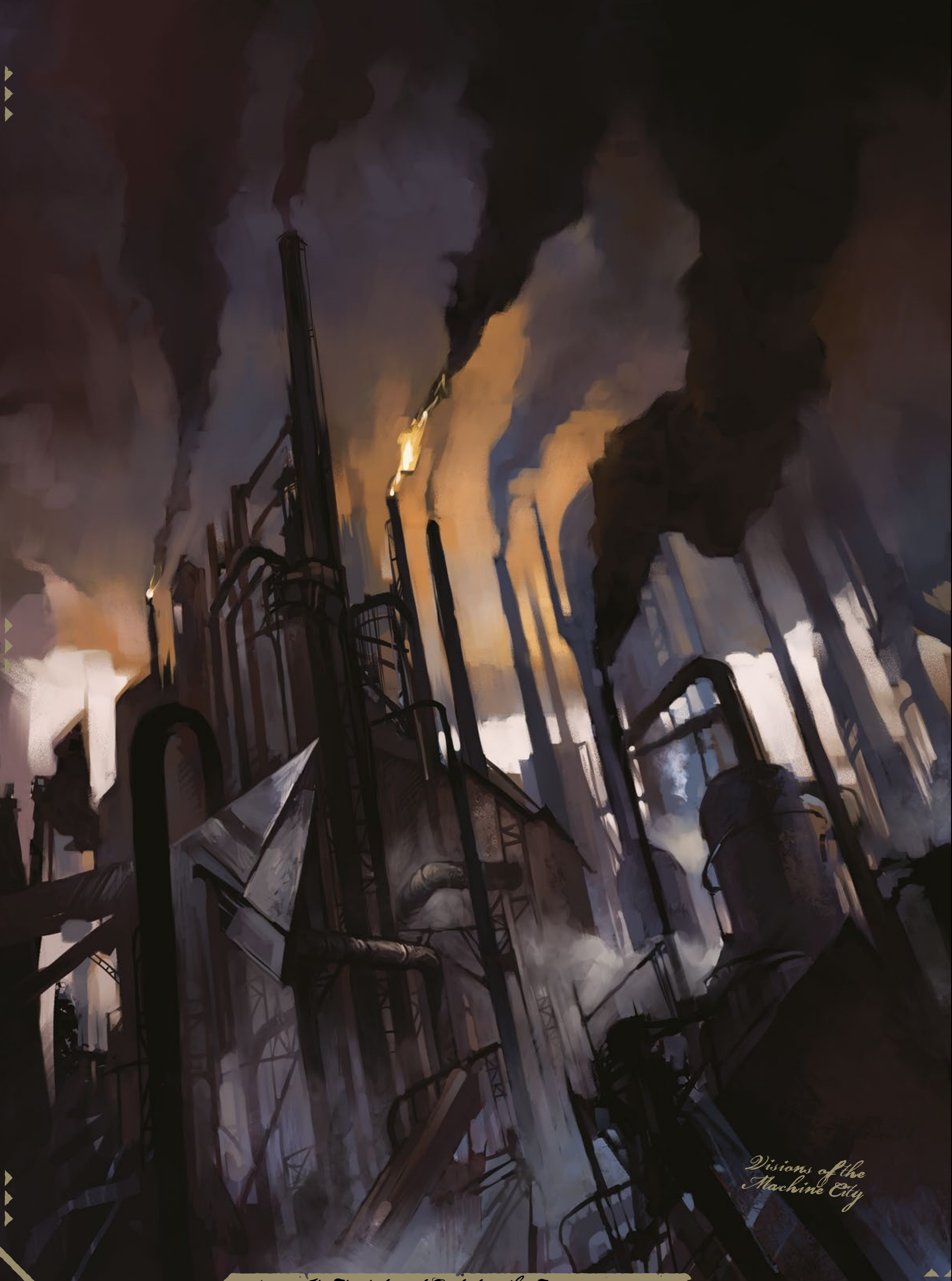
Few of the adults in St. Jude's act with any form of bravery, no matter the fate of the facility or the children around them. Most are engaged in actions of self-interest or self-preservation, already having written off the inmates as broken beyond repair. Examples of where the various adults might be found or what they might be doing are as follows:

- Dr. Crowe manifests as the razide in one scenario, but if the angel has begun to drag this facility into Metropolis, she instead appears scared and desperate, ushering the children to follow her into her office. There, she points at the window, which is now open, and tells them it's the only way out. She is guiding them directly into Inferno, since the window acts as a portal. Depending on how collapsed the facility is, Crowe either adopts her natural form and mauls the resisting children, or escapes through the window with the parting words *"You made a deal with the angel. Now see how you like it."*
- Father Vogel retreats to his chapel and prays furiously, believing everything that's happening is because of his sin. If any children interrupt him, he lashes out at them, calls them demons, and tries to drive them out with a heavy wooden cross as a club. He then uses it to fasten the doors shut. If Vogel doesn't burn to death, and the razide doesn't break down his door, his chapel remains intact all the way to the Machine City. He'll then exit and be ripped to pieces by the inhabitants of Metropolis.
- Mr. Greep single-mindedly attempts to seek out Mrs. Edgewood. He's been having dreams about this apocalyptic event for some time, and believes now is the time to satisfy his basest urges before he meets his maker. Any children in his way are ignored or smacked hard. Greep will undoubtedly die here.
- For her part, Mrs. Edgewood is more interested in escape than having sex with Mr. Greep, and is found dashing between rooms, trying to find a window she can break through. She's unaware of the roof exit and likely to fall prey to the constricting cables, the razide, or the tekron.
- Chris Speer has had enough of this shit and locks himself away in the freezer, hoping to outlast the fire and the monsters running rampage around the facility. It's possible he survives if the facility stays above ground, and if he doesn't freeze to death. He'll even allow children in with him, leading to a horrible situation where they must then decide whether to watch each other die or try the door to see if it's safe outside.
- Chanara Franklin has either already attempted to escape or is on her way to do so. She knows about the hole in the roof and suggests anyone else follows her, but neglects to bring a rope or other method of climbing off the roof. Just as she reaches the rooftop, it would be appropriate for a cable or razide claw to snake around her ankle and drag her back inside.

The Defiance of Youth

Most of the St. Jude's inmates spend this scene trying to find a safe place to hide or an escape route, but both are in short supply. This leads to some of the children standing up to the monsters, unprepared to cower or skulk like the adults in this place. Examples of where the various children might be found or what they might be doing are as follows:

- Isaac Hill willingly serves Dr. Crowe if she adopts the razide form. Otherwise, his hard image breaks as the center falls to chaos, and more desperate than perhaps any of the other children, he tries to break a window and pull the bars free. In doing so, he slashes his wrist and begs others for help before passing out from blood loss.
- Georgina Baron stands tall in the face of Inferno and Metropolis, taking a bed rail and preparing to swat it at razide, tekron, or whatever comes for her. It's unlikely she'll survive, but she goes down swinging, and encourages the PCs to do likewise.
- Dillon Poke remains locked up in an empty room on the top floor, using his talents with pyrokinesis to immolate the ground floor and anyone foolish enough to stay down there for long. Even if he's freed, he shows zero interest in leaving St. Jude's.



Visions of the Machine City

- Frances Coachman remains catatonic or lethargic, depending on the situation with her pills. A PC may try to carry her out to freedom. The GM should reward such a selfless act, but also have the fact the character is slowed come as a penalty to another PC.
- Clifford Pryce is unpleasant, but also unprepared to be pushed around by adults, monsters, or anything else. He fights back against the tide of hell, and is likely ripped apart by the razide or by the strands of Metropolis snaking through the facility.
- Alia Johnson is going to enjoy this mayhem all the way down. No matter whether Inferno or Metropolis is more influential, she enjoys terrorising and making the lives of the PCs and other NPCs as awful as they can be, for as long as they last. The PCs should find another child, clearly killed via mundane means, with Alia's initials carved into their body. She joins the hunt for the PCs and waits until any end up alone before striking.
- Oscar Bevois joins the razide's disciples if St. Jude's starts the fall into Inferno, but is largely passive behind Isaac and Alia. If Metropolis consumes the facility, Oscar makes the mistake of climbing into the walls where he so often took his victims. He becomes trapped and pleads for help, but is squeezed and rendered to pieces by gears and cables.
- Mo Rahman is surprisingly calm as the facility collapses, only jumping into action if someone who has shown him kindness is threatened. He is prepared to face the tekron or razide head-on, if necessary.

ESCAPE FROM ST. JUDE'S

The night's sky has never felt so refreshing, but it's a long way down and no easy way to get there. You feel the building shift violently underneath you. The security personnel are taking notice, but haven't seen you on the roof.

The only way out is down, with all the damage that comes with it. Thankfully, while the security personnel here are violent and vindictive, they aren't going to throw anyone – injured or not – back inside a collapsing building. If PCs start hurling themselves from the roof, the security agents go to their aid.

Some characters might break their necks. Some may get away with a sprained ankle or wrist. The important thing is they're free from the madness within St. Jude's.

For anyone who escapes and survives the fall, this is a fine time to insert a Role Scene, or an epilogue from the following:

- The character awakens in a hospital, their loved ones by their side. Everything seems all right. But then Dr. Crowe arrives to ask how the patient is doing. It all ends with screams.
- The character is immediately transferred to a new center, not quite as bad as St. Jude's. The character is afflicted by nightmares every night, struggling to stay awake during the day.
- Due to the catastrophe at St. Jude's, the state takes pity on the character and frees them. But the paranoia never goes away. Sometimes the character thinks they see another of the inmates on the streets, sometimes an adult like Greep or Vogel.

This isn't freedom. This is Inferno. You've entered a realm filled with flame, torment, and bodies hanging, struggling on spikes. You've exited one hell and entered another. Except in this one, there's no hope of salvation. You feel the hooks and chains threading through your skin and your clothes as you join the other dire marionettes in this place, to be played with forever for the amusement of Dr. Crowe and others like her.

For any characters who escaped via Dr. Crowe's window or survived the razide but followed St. Jude's all the way down into Inferno, this is their fate. It's not nice and it's not pretty, but thinking you can survive a descent into hell or trust a demon is foolish, whether you're an adult or a child.

This isn't freedom. This is Metropolis. You've entered a realm filled with gears, pipes, pistons, cables, and human bodies on production lines, augmented with metal and plastic. You survived the tekron and the collapse of St. Jude's, but you're not sure you can survive this alien realm for long, especially as wires start looping through your skin and clothes as you feel your very beings change.

If the characters hide themselves in the walls as the facility collapses, somehow negotiate for amnesty with the angel, or just ride St. Jude's down to Metropolis as the cables turn the center inside-out, this is their fate. It's marginally better than being sent to Inferno, but only marginally.

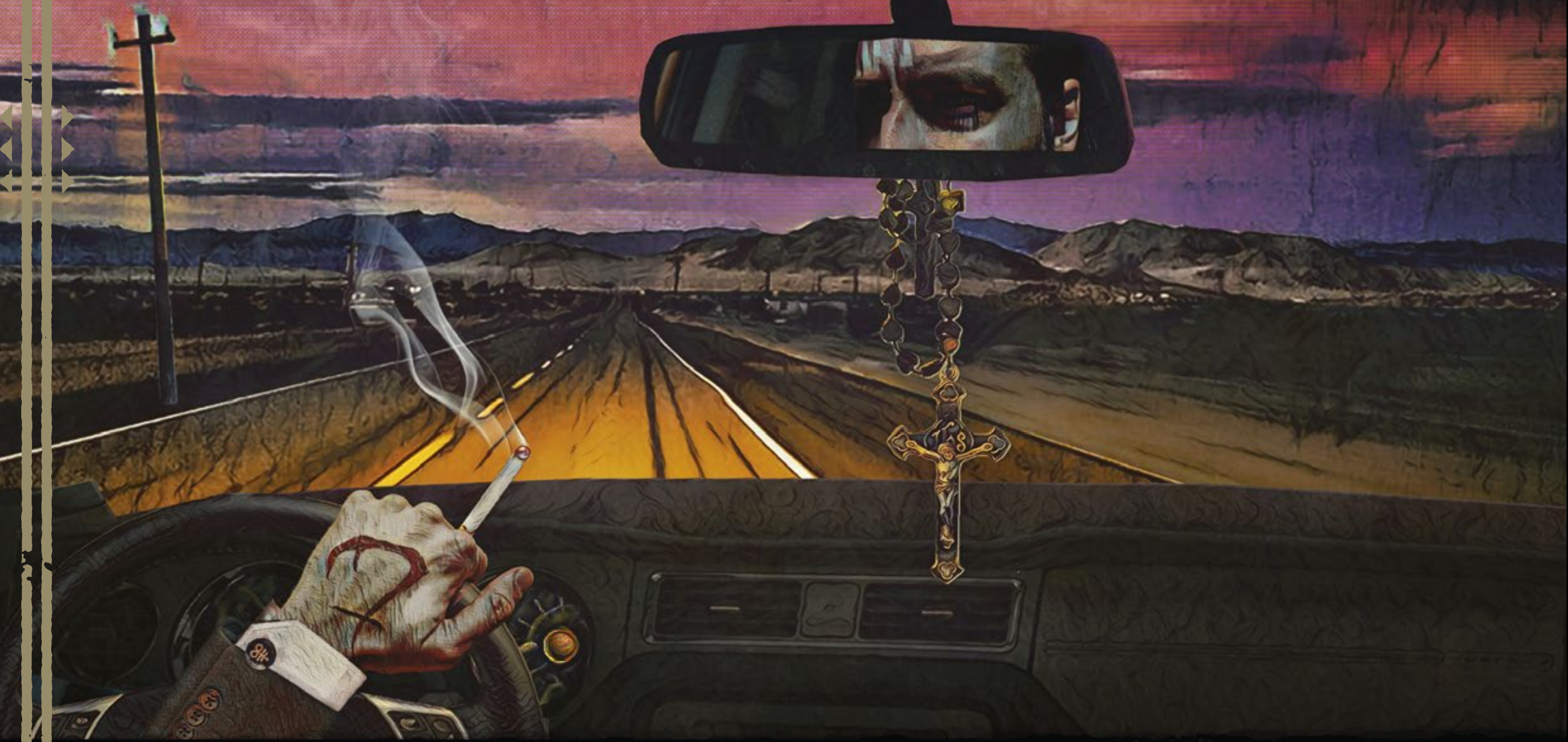
Role Scenes

The GM is encouraged to once again give each Role an important, character-focused scene during this act, whether as a callback to something they've already done, or as a meaningful resolution to one of their dark secrets. At this point, characters will have developed to a degree that this scenario can't account for their direction or ambition, so the only advice is to keep it personal and make it rewarding. The player has made a long journey to get to this point, so don't short-change them on a satisfying resolution.

What Happens Next?

This is the end of It Started and Ended with Screams, a scenario exploring many of the facets of childhood suffering. It does not offer a balm to the torments the characters suffered, nor does it truly resolve the threat of Metropolis or Inferno's inhabitants now becoming interested in these characters' souls. What it does is awaken these youths to the world of ***KULT: Divinity Lost***, and while nobody would wish for this manner of tutelage, it helps equip them for the next time they fall between the cracks of reality.

Surviving characters can be played in future scenarios. The ruins of St. Jude's may be ripe for exploration. The angel who manipulated events was never at St. Jude's in person, so he will definitely keep an eye on anyone who got out alive. If the razide and angel both survived, and anything of St. Jude's remains, you can guarantee the two will bide their time before turning it into another monstrous institution, and starting the cycle of screams all over again.



THE DRIVER

Horror Starter

A DESPERATE FUGITIVE IS SPEEDING THROUGH THE DESERT IN A CAR about to give out.

Who is the driver running from?

Who have they brought with them?

What single advantage do they have against the threat that is hot in pursuit behind them?

And what do they see coming up ahead?

This improv-heavy scenario starts by you, the GM, describing the initial set-up of the character's situation to the player. Read out the entire section below titled *The Driver*, and give them the three choices detailed there.

From there, play can commence either fully improvised (you need to prepare nothing more than what's on this first page here), or with some additional prep - while still leaving plenty of room for the player's choices to influence the direction in which the game's fiction will develop.

THE DRIVER

You're fleeing through the Nevada desert night in an old Dodge muscle car. The AC is broken, and the hot desert wind is rushing through the windows. The fuel gauge is on empty, and you expect the engine to fail any minute now.

YOU ARE FLEEING FROM...

- *A heist gone wrong:* Some cop died and your partner Glover is lying unconscious in the back seat with an untreated gunshot to the gut. (If you choose this, you also have to tell me what you have stolen).
- *Your former boss and her henchmen:* Sometimes you have to take what you can get. This time, the choices were limited: You have your boss' five-year-old daughter Destiny in the back seat. (Tell me who your boss is and why you're fleeing from her).
- *An enemy from your past:* You thought you killed her, but now she's back and you don't seem to be able to get rid of her. In the passenger seat is your spouse, sleeping after being dragged out of the bed in the middle of the night and forced to flee with you. (Tell me who your enemy is).

YOU HAVE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE...

- A .45 pistol with a half-empty magazine containing custom made bullets.
- An old heirloom in the form of a 1st World War bayonet. It is said that bad things happen if you stroke it with blood.
- Someone waiting for you out in the desert. (Tell me who it is).

AND JUST NOW, COMING UP AHEAD ON THE HIGHWAY, YOU CAN SEE...

- An old hotel, long past its glory days.
- A retro gas station with a small store and diner.
- A small house, looking like a private residence, painted in withered sage green.

THE GAMEMASTER

After every choice you read to the player, ask them to pick one of the options right away, before continuing. Ask any follow-up questions that arise from this option before giving them the next choice. When the player asks you questions back, detail the situation and circumstances as much as you have to, so it makes sense and conveys a strong picture, but take care to leave blanks and questions open for now.

When this is done, a strong starting situation will have been established. Now you tell the player:

"The car coughs on its last few drops of gasoline, and finally dies. The building you saw is up ahead, you almost reached it before the engine failed. What do you do?"

The Horror Contract

In a high-improv game like this, where a lot of player input is allowed for in the initial setup of the story, it is especially important to discuss the Horror Contract (chapter 5 in the core rules) with the player before starting. Make sure you know if the player has any forbidden topics or would prefer to keep certain elements of the emerging fiction off limits. Once you have a good idea of this, take care to improvise the game's content safely within those confines. You have only one player to focus on here, so you can create some truly intense and personal experiences together - but it's also important to keep them feeling safe and happy with what's going on in the game. If in doubt, consider employing a stop sign or safe word for the game, or do occasional OK-check-ins with the player.

That said, in any areas of the fiction where you are not given any limits to work with, feel free to go all out on its content. Make it dark and threatening, dare to be unpleasant, and above all, Play to find out...

TWO CHOICES

Start Playing Right Away: After you ask the player what they do, build on those answers. Improvise people, locations, things that are happening, and threats and complications that arise, as you go.

Keep asking the player questions about their character and its past every now and then.

Make gameplay a creative conversation, in which you're both inspired by each other's contributions, exploring and developing the story together even as it unfolds.

If gameplay grinds to a halt and you're in doubt what to do, escalate the situation: Create rising tension by adding challenging new elements (e.g. time limit, new threats, occasional surprising twists) and leaning on established complications already presented in the fiction (i.e. the pursuers, the companion NPCs).

Play to find out what will happen, and how it will all wrap up in the end.

Use Some More Prep: If the above option sounds good you can stop reading this section. If, however, you feel uncomfortable with such a high level of near-total improv, or find yourself wanting some additional inspiration during the game, here are a number of options and considerations regarding how this starting situation might unfold. All of these are completely optional, and many other variants are easily conceivable and definitely possible.

People and Threats at the Locations

THE OLD HOTEL, LONG PAST ITS GLORY DAYS

Out front sits an old man with a guitar, and a sleeping dog beside him.

The man is blind and the dog nearly deaf. Neither of them are initially hostile, but they may not hear the character & companion approach over the guitar music, and the dog may bite if surprised or scared.

There is something sinister in one of the rooms, and it may awaken and call out to the character - especially if blood is spilled, sex is bad, or drugs are consumed.

THE RETRO GAS STATION WITH A SMALL STORE AND DINER

There is a Harley and a truck out front, but the station is all out of gas.

Inside are a fat trucker and a scrawny hillbilly biker, eating strawberry pie. A scarred waitress brings them coffee. They are in the middle of arranging a deal (perhaps a freshly cooked batch of crystal meth, a sports bag full of assault rifles, or a bunch of young Mexican women in the back of the truck?)

More bikers may show up later, to seal the deal. As may local cops, who may or may not also be in on it.

THE SMALL HOUSE IN WITHERED SAGE GREEN

A family preparing food. They invite the driver and companion to join them for dinner, and offer to treat their wounds (if any) and help them get gas afterwards. A car can be seen in their garage.

They are secretly all members of a sexual torture cult, and have been praying to their dark god to send two victims. One shall be sacrificed and one shall be the god's chosen vessel.

Several of their neighbors may come over later for the rituals.

Opportunities at the Locations

At any of the offered locations, the Driver might find things they need - medical supplies to treat someone's wound, an opportunity to sleep for a while, food, some sort of vehicle to continue their escape, a weapon to defend themselves etc.

Attaining these things should not always be easy; in fact, their availability should not be obvious in every case. In all likelihood, the player will tell you what they are looking for, and you can use that to create interesting challenges and scenes where tension is built up and hard choices need to be made.

Threats in Pursuit

A HEIST GONE WRONG

Angry cops pursue the fleeing criminals. One policeman died, either as a result of intentional violence or by accident, and now the others are riled up for retribution and justice. Are the cops just doing their job in pursuing the robbers? Or is it somehow personal? Are the character & companion known criminals with a long list of previous infractions, or first time offenders who the cops know nothing about?

YOUR FORMER BOSS AND HER HENCHMEN

Criminal thugs led by a furious capo pursue the fleeing character. They have no scruples about using deadly force, but are also under strict orders to not risk any harm to the little girl. What kind of work did the character do for the boss? Why did they abduct the girl? What are the personal relations they have with the men and women now pursuing them? Can some of them perhaps be drawn over to the character's side?

AN ENEMY FROM YOUR PAST

A personal nemesis pursues the fleeing lovers. Dangerous and relentless enough that the character tried to kill them before, and now they're back seeking revenge. Who is the enemy and what has caused the enmity between them so long ago? Who is the character's spouse, and do they know anything about the enemy? How did the character try to kill the enemy before, and why did it not work? Is there some other way they could try it again?

Longer Game

If you and your player wish to have a longer game, for example if the character doesn't stay at the first location they happen upon, but instead finds some means of transport and continues their flight, you may wish to use the other locations provided - or come up with entirely new ones. (Perhaps a cave in the desert, an abandoned amusement park, a cursed hippie commune, or a lone trailer home)

For a longer game, make sure to introduce enough threats to last you for a while. Take care that the player can never completely rid themselves of all the threats that beset them.

Ending

For a strong ending, work towards giving the player a final hard choice which determines how things will go down in the end. Remember *Thelma and Louise*? That's the kind of hard choice that wraps up a good, tension-filled story in a strong and satisfying way. You can go as dark as you and your player are comfortable with.

The Driver's journey could end with:

- Death (i.e. by violence, thirst and starvation, suicide)
- Captivity (i.e. imprisonment, slavery, buried in a cave, trapped in another dimension)
- Madness (i.e. raving mania, insane obsession, catatonic fugue, schizophrenic delusions)
- Mutilation (i.e. a hand, an eye, their tongue, use of their legs)
- Loss (i.e. of riches, a loved one, their faith, their hope for a better life somewhere else)
- ...

It could also end with:

- Escape (i.e. to freedom, restitution, redemption, salvation...)

Although that one is perhaps best used at the price of one of the others listed above.

For example, there could be a choice for the character to escape but it would mean having to leave their partner, spouse, or for the little girl to die or fall into captivity.

It could be a choice between getting caught by the cops (becoming imprisoned for your crimes) or cutting off your own hand to get out of the handcuffs and escape them for good.

Or perhaps escape is possible only by either succumbing to madness (descending into mindless rage or delusional acceptance of what you have to do to make it happen), or willingly entering into slavery to otherworldly beings (accepting the pact the demonic voices in your head have been demanding you to seal with them), or abandoning your stolen riches as a price for your freedom (you will be free, but poor again).

Attributes

For Attributes, you may just give the Driver a +1 in every Attribute, for the sake of simplicity. This is the quickest way to get started, and well suited to either a short or long game.

Alternatively, you could give them +1 in every Attribute, except for one that is at +3, and one that is at -1. You can make the player choose in advance which ones these are, or let it emerge during the game, when the moves start getting triggered.
Or use the regular distribution. It will take a bit longer to get the scenario started, but any way that feels right to you is a good way to do it.

During the game, you might allow the player to raise one Attribute by 1 point for every major challenge that has been overcome. For every major failure they suffer, you may opt to decrease one Attribute by 1 point.

For **Stability**, consider starting the Driver off at *Shaken* (7) for a short game, or at *Uneasy* (9) for a longer game or if you plan on hitting them with a lot of horrors in rapid succession.

SEVEN SISTERS

SEVEN SISTERS IS A SCENARIO SET IN BERLIN, FEBRUARY 1945, two months before the city is taken by The Red Army. The story is intended to be played with the six pre-generated characters listed at the end of the adventure. While it can still be played with other characters than those provided, the setting and story require that a handful of the characters are working as informants for the Allies.

BERLIN, FEBRUARY 1945

By the end of February 1945, Berlin is partially, but not completely, destroyed from the Allied bomb raids. The greatest destruction comes from the raid on 3 February when the eastern parts of the city partially burn to the ground. By the end of April, the city's population explodes as hordes of refugees flee East Prussia to escape the Red Army. The Soviet forces launch an attack against Berlin on 16 April. By 20 April, the artillery fire is initiated and the city is cut off. These events will not take place for another two months however.

The Nazi leadership is holding onto the lies that the war can be won and refuses to evacuate the city. Tens of thousands of prisoners of war are worked to death in factories, or are executed in camps and prisons to get rid of them when Germany falls. Food is rationed and the citizens spend much of their day queuing to receive their daily bread. Hyperinflation makes it nigh impossible to purchase anything other than rationed goods. One kilo of coffee fetches about 2000 Reichsmark on the black market. Cigarettes have become alternate currency, with one cigarette equaling about 10 Reichsmark. The large central park Tiergarten is in ruins, since the trees have either been cut down for kindling or burned down. Fuel is almost impossible for civilians to access, but public transport is still running somewhat reliably. The entire city is holding its breath, waiting for the coming invasion.

Berlin-Inferno

In the spring of 1945, the veil between Elysium and Inferno is in tatters. Members among the Nazis have entered into a pact with one of the Death Angels, Thaumiel, who is a growing power in Inferno after the disappearance of the Demiurge. The Death Angels influence is strong in Berlin and its principle (Power) is tightly woven with the Nazi ideology. At night, and under the cover of the Allies' bombing campaign, creatures from Inferno wander the city, terrifying the human citizenry. Unlucky Berliners may even find themselves falling into Inferno in particularly affected areas of the city. The Gamemaster is free to show as much or little of Inferno as they want, depending on what is suitable for the group, mood, or ambiance.

The Mission

Allied agents are tasked with finding Nicholas "Nick" Laughton, a high-ranking MI6 agent in Berlin. Laughton has access to a large web of contacts in the German capital and information and names that the British do not want falling into Soviet (or German) hands. When it becomes evident that the Soviet forces will take Berlin before the rest of the Allies, Laughton is ordered to leave Berlin. However, he does not do so. He claims that he has "unfinished business" to attend to. More than a month has passed since the MI6 command sent his last orders. He has not answered calls for three weeks. He checked out from the hotel where he spent the winter and has since gone dark. MI6 command are certain he is still alive. Just three days ago they heard from their contact Leonore Isenburg, who stated that Laughton has been in regular contact with her, but appears haggard and stressed. This is worrying news. MI6 fears that he is being extorted, or worse, that he's double-crossed them. Isenburg claims to not know where he's staying and she can't follow him without raising suspicion. London decides to send a small group to track him down and either extract or execute him.

The agents are tasked with locating Laughton and determining if he's been compromised. The heads of MI6 in London would prefer he be extracted and brought home. If this cannot be achieved, Laughton must die.

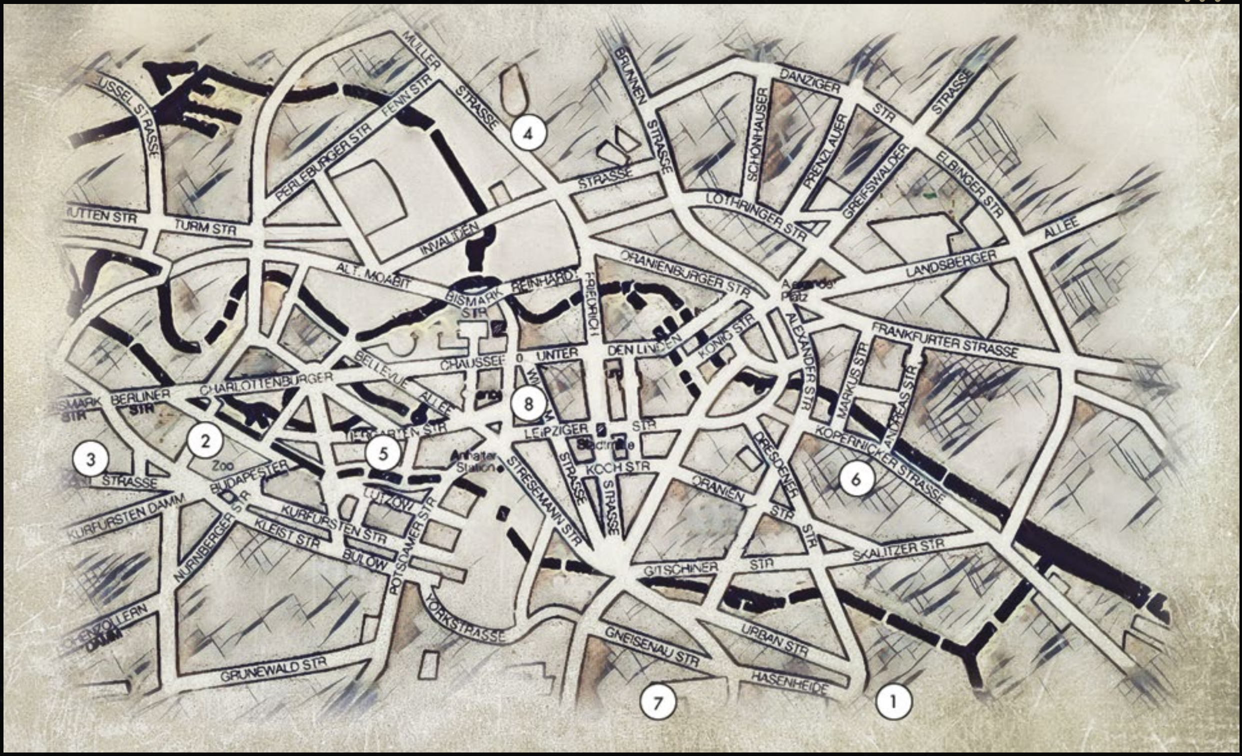
Laughton's Story

Nick Laughton has been acting as a double agent on behalf of the Germans. Until the dissolution of the Abwehr in early 1944, he was feeding them information which led to several British agents losing their lives in 1943. An esteemed British double agent is a useful asset, but one to be kept secret. Almost all who knew him were executed in 1944 or died on the front lines. At the start of 1945, only two individuals capable of identifying Laughton remain: his contact Leon Jaeger, and his secretary Friedrich Kindermann. When parts of the Abwehr's command were detained for the assassination attempt on Hitler in July 1944, Leon Jaeger managed to be sent to the eastern front instead. After losing his leg, he was sent back home to Berlin. Friedrich Kindermann used to serve in the Luftwaffe, and he returned to their ranks after the Abwehr dissolved.

For a long time, Laughton considered officially defecting to Germany and procuring himself a new identity after the war. However, he has begun to realize that he's on the losing side. He is growing concerned that his past as a double agent will destroy his career, or even get him hanged for treason. When London calls for him to return at the start of 1945, he starts to investigate who could expose and ruin him. Only Jaeger and Kindermann remain of the Abwehr staff that knew him, but finding them proves difficult and he is forced to remain longer than planned in Berlin. When the PCs arrive, he's managed to murder both men and destroy some official paperwork that Jaeger saved: proof of him acting as a double agent on behalf of the Germans. Now he plans to switch sides again and return home as a real British agent.

For the duration of his stay in Berlin, Laughton has operated under the identity name of Lucas Smets, a Belgian citizen and, over the course of the last year, a reasonably successful fixer on the black market. Until 14 February he stayed at the Hotel Savoy on the Fasanenstraße. When he decided to take Jaeger and Kindermann out, he checked out and has since stayed in the basement of a bombed- out house in South Wedding. He owns a dented DKW F2, and has a lot of cash, cigarettes and morphine at his disposal, which he uses to bribe his way out of tight spots.

Unfortunately for Laughton, he's arrested by the Gestapo at the home of Lenore Isenburg before he manages to get out of Berlin - and all those who could prove that he served as a German agent are now dead. The Gestapo bring him and Isenburg to a secret torture facility located within the Bethania Hospital in the Kreuzberg district.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SCHÖNHAUSER
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PRENZLAUER
GREIFSWALDER
ELBINGER STR
LOTHRINGER STR
ORANIENBURGER STR
ALLEE
LANDSBERGER
Alexander Platz
KÖNIG STR
ALEXANDER STR
FRANKFURTER STRASSE
MARKUS STR
ANDREAS STR
KOPERNICKER STRASSE
UNTER DEN LINDEN
CHAUSSEE
BELLEVUE
CHARLOTTENBURGER
BERLINER STR
BISMARK STR
STRASSE
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TIERGARTEN STR
Anhalter Station
LEIPZIGER STR
KOCH STR
ORANIEN STR
DRESDENER STR
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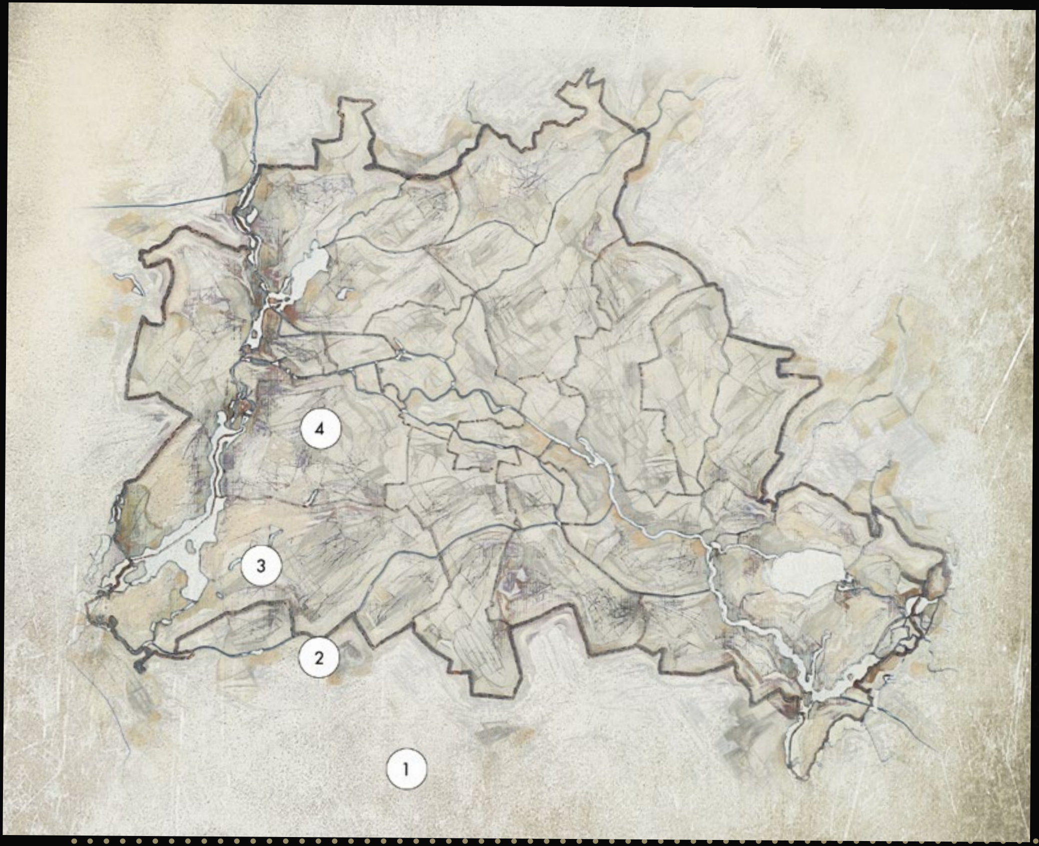
STRESEMANN STR
YORKSTRASSE
GITSCHINER STR
SKALITZER STR
URBAN STR
GNEISENAU STR
HASENHEIDE
HOHENZOLLERN DAMM
GRUNEWALD STR

Central Berlin

- [1] Druckerei Bauer
- [2] Flakturm 1
- [3] Savignyplatz
- [4] Goretti Kaffee
- [5] The Italian embassy
- [6] The Bethania
- [7] Polizeidirektion 5
- [8] Gestapo's headquarters at Prinz-Albrecht-Straße



Map overview Berlin

- [1] Landing
- [2] Teltow
- [3] Villa Isenburg
- [4] Haus des Rundfunks

Diakonissen Krankenhaus Bethania

The Bethania Hospital is a hundred-year-old landmark on the outskirts of Berlin. Allegedly founded by the King of Prussia, it was actually built by angels that fled Metropolis during the first wave of European industrialization in the early 19th century. The hospital grounds exist parallel in Elysium and Metropolis, something that is especially significant in 1945 when the rest of the city opens up to Inferno. Hospital management refused to collaborate with the Nazis for as long as they could, but in 1941 the Gestapo seized control of the grounds. The majority of the acting medical staff were sent to the front lines as medics or soldiers. Seven angels hid alongside a number of human nuns, clergy, and lay sisters. The Gestapo's magicians, sworn to Thaumiel, managed to corrupt the angels and force them to submit to the powers of Inferno. Thaumiel's influence has transformed them into noxious shadows of their former selves. The Gestapo uses these angels to torture prisoners held in the Metropolitan Bethania. These angels are forbidden from killing humans or letting them die (thus giving them any relief) so their prisoners are effectively sentenced to eternal cold-blooded torture.

Several of the human nuns and lay sisters suspect that something is afoot, but those that have been permitted to stay cannot see beyond the Illusion nor imagine the truth. In the early weeks of 1945, the Gestapo also transported prisoners from labor camps in and around Berlin to the Bethania Hospital and sacrificed them in an attempt to release the institution from its connection to Metropolis. So far this has proven unsuccessful.

In the spring of 1945, construction finishes on a Gestapo office hidden away behind the nuns' convent dormitories. This office houses parts of the secret police's occult division, officially a department for special interrogation tactics. The chief of activity is Max Wester, an old acquaintance of Leonore Isenburg and George Patel (see the list of player characters). Several prisoners are held within the part of the hospital hidden away in Metropolis, Nicholas Laughton and Leonore Isenburg can be found among them.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

January: The MI6 agent Nicholas Laughton is ordered home to London by his superiors, but instead goes into hiding in Berlin.

February: Laughton investigates what loose ends could expose him as a German double agent. He's relieved to find only two living individuals that know of his identity: Leon Jaeger and Friedrich Kindermann.

Thursday, February 22nd: Laughton makes contact with Leonore Isenburg and inquires about the Allies' plans. He asks if she can help him get out of Germany. She has previously managed to take people through Metropolis and Laughton is aware that she has a peculiar talent for people-smuggling. However, she is no longer able to do so, as Berlin has opened itself to Inferno. Isenburg informs MI6 that Laughton is alive and up to something.

Sunday, February 25th: Patel, Drummond and Farley receive their mission from the head of MI6 in London. Felix Bauer is told where to retrieve the three agents.

Monday February 26th: 08.00: Patel, Drummond and Farley are flown to a small airport near the front in the western Netherlands, where they refuel before continuing on to Berlin.

22.00: Laughton lures Kindermann to Tiergarten and murders him.

23.30: Laughton murders Jaeger and sets fire to his apartment. Someone notices him and he escapes to Isenburg's home. Both Laughton and Isenburg are arrested shortly thereafter.

00.00: Patel, Drummond, and Farley land by parachute at a field south of Teltow and are collected by Bauer.

The Characters

The pre-generated characters are four Allied agents and two Jewish women from Germany. Four of the characters are men, but they can easily be swapped for women if that would be preferable, and backstory details can be changed as necessary. The majority of Berlin's population at the time is women.

Three of the agents land by parachute at the start of the adventure and are collected by a fourth, a German rebel and informant for the Allied forces. At the start of the adventure, the agents encounter the two women who've hidden themselves away in a basement.

An occultist that can wander through the Illusion (represented by George Patel) and a Berliner with connections and contacts in the city (represented by Felix Bauer) should always be part of the group. All characters except for Felix Bauer have an alias that they use while moving through Berlin."Leftover" characters can be used as non player characters (NPCs).

Story Theme

Humanity under inhumane conditions: In the spring of 1945, Berlin is teetering at the edge of the abyss. The angels of the story have transformed into devils. How will humanity react when everything is at stake?

TO BERLIN

Briefing in London

Patel, Drummond, and Farley are summoned to the head office of MI6 on the afternoon of February 25th. The head office of the secret service can be found in a brown nine storey building in central London. Drummond is told this is a sensitive operation with a small group of people only loosely connected to the secret service: Patel is formally employed by the French exile regime and Farley for the SAS.

The trio receives their mission directly from the chief, Sir Stewart Menzies, who receives them in a conference room on the third floor. Menzies appears deeply stressed. He explains that Patel, Drummond, and Farley are to parachute into a field just outside of Berlin. An Allied bomb raid will keep the German air defenses busy throughout the night. Bauer will collect them and provide them with Volkssturm armaments and appropriate clothing. They are then to visit the last known location of Laughton, Leonore Isenburg's home, and pick up his trail.

Menzies explains that Laughton must be located and, ideally, returned safely to Britain. If this proves to be impossible, he must be terminated. The agents must also find out what he's been doing since he broke off contact. Laughton has been in contact with Leonore Isenburg, so the characters should start by speaking with her. Drummond receives Leonore Isenburg's address and a list of contacts in Berlin (See Handout: Contacts in Berlin at the end of the scenario), who may be useful if Isenburg is unable to help them. The most important one is Kindermann, who was Laughton's contact within the Luftwaffe. Drummond also receives the trio's false IDs and a briefcase filled with 1,000,000 reichsmark in a variety of notes (the reichsmark has little to no value following the last six months of hyperinflation). He is also given 20 boxes of cigarettes that can be used for bribes.

This is a good opportunity to introduce the three first characters to each other. Patel and Drummond are already acquainted with each other. Farley has recently returned to England from Italy and does not know of the others.

The next day the three are collected and chauffeured to Biggin Hill, an RAF airport two hours south of London. There they are provided with German clothes, so they don't raise any suspicion in case Bauer fails to collect them. An Avro Anson, a smaller aircraft with twin motors, is waiting for them. Flight Lieutenant Charles Hickney, a man in his forties with a thick mustache and a tired look in his eyes, and Pilot Officer Dan Hawthorne, who cannot be much older than twenty years old, man the plane. Hawthorn has a stern look upon his face and is very curious about the characters and their mission. Overnight they pass the channel to the Netherlands, where they refuel before carrying on into the German airspace. The characters are dropped by parachute south of Berlin, while Allied planes bomb the city.

Druckerei Bauer, Neukölln

Should the GM wish to do so, they can run a flashback scene where Felix Bauer is contacted by MI6. Bauer's printer, Bauer Druckhaus, is located on Bergstrasse in the workers' quarters (Neukölln). It was partially destroyed about six months ago. Since then, the structures have been used by Bauer's Volkssturm forces. The great hall with the large printer is in ruins, but the storage remains, and is now used to store toiletries, clothes, and bicycles. Felix Bauer's office also survived, including the secret room hidden behind a bookcase where he keeps his secret radio that connects to his MI6 contacts on a regular schedule.

Late in the evening, before Monday 26 February, he receives a coded message instructing him to collect three agents at the specified coordinates outside of Teltow, a small town just south of Berlin, late the following night. The agents already have papers and identities, but Bauer is to provide them with appropriate clothes and armaments so they can pass for Volkssturm officers. Felix has a Steyr 30 automobile, parked in the storage by the firm. Clothes, adjusted to appear more like uniforms, Volkssturm brassards, automatic pistols (Dreyse M1907), and submachine guns (MP 3008) can be found in the Volkssturm office. Weapons, clothes, and brassards can be stowed away safely in the backseat of his car.

Lack of fuel

Fuel has long been rationed in Berlin and it is almost impossible for civilians to gain access to fuel for vehicles (primarily synthetic fuel made from coal). Bauer can get to and from the extraction point, and then drive for a further 2 miles. The characters would do well not to waste fuel. There are a small number of bicycles available at Bauer's Volkssturm storage, and the public transport is still running, at least partially

A muddy field south of Teltow

Teltow is located two miles away from Berlin, but Bauer is stopped several times at road blocks where he needs to explain what he is doing out in the middle of the night. As the city is being bombed there should be plenty of reasons for someone to be out. After a cold January, February brings milder weather and the roads are muddy. It takes a couple of hours to drive to the coordinates, a waterlogged field between two groves. There Bauer is met by the three agents.

Caught!

The characters' parachutes were spotted from the prison camp in Ruhlsdorf, a camp that is now used to hold civilian prisoners (mostly Soviet women) , two kilometers north of the fields. Four SS men arrive at the scene in a Volkswagen Kübelwagen to investigate the matter only fifteen minutes after the characters have landed. They drive with their headlights turned off and can barely be heard due to the distant noises of bombs and gunfire coming from the city, so it is unlikely they are spotted before they notice Bauer's car by the side of the road.

The characters can fast-talk, bribe the soldiers, or shoot their way out. Gunfire is not as loud as one might think, not with the bombs in the background. If the characters allow themselves to be captured, they will be brought before the commandant at the Ruhlsdorf camp, who will have them transferred to the Gestapo headquarters in central Berlin the following morning. This is a good opportunity to remind them of something Bauer is already aware of - it is possible to bribe yourself out of almost anything in Berlin these days. Five boxes of cigarettes is enough for the SS-soldiers to "forget" that they ever saw them.

To Isenburg's Home

The quickest route to Isenburg's house is due north through Teltow, an industrial town where forced laborers from the Ruhlsdorf camp produce detonators. If the characters drive towards Teltow just before dawn they will pass one hundred starving Soviet women marching to work in the factory. The town itself, with a few thousand inhabitants, is mostly bombed to pieces. The players' characters are stopped at roadblocks both before and after Teltow, but nobody questions Bauer. The road continues north through the outskirts of Berlin, where the land is crisscrossed with trenches, and into the living quarters southwest of Zehlendorf. This area has managed to survive the bombings suspiciously well, with unscathed trees and hedges and exquisite merchant homes.

LEONORE ISENBURG'S HOME

Leonore Isenburg's home is a green, late 17th century house located in the outskirts of Berlin's most luxurious housing district, with a view of the picturesque lake Schlachtensee. All the houses in the area have large gardens framed by walls or tall hedges. Many have cars parked in the driveway - a large number of high ranking military officers live here. Isenburg's house is surrounded by tall hedges within a black iron fence that is painted with subtle occult symbols to protect it from the infernal influences that have all but consumed large parts of Berlin. The lawn has been dug up and transformed into a subsistence garden, now covered by straw dusted with a thin layer of frost.

Characters that are gifted in the occult arts notice protective signs weaving across walls and floors inside of her home. Mrs. Isenburg has specialized in protection magic. Her home has remained unnoticed throughout the entire war. Most are entirely unaware it is even there. The decor is modern with Bauhaus furnishings and art from the twenties. Isenburg appears to be living alone. The Weisz sisters have hidden away in a furnished part of the basement.

The Arrest

None of the characters witness this scene. The four agents are located in the southern parts of Berlin, and the Weisz sisters are asleep in the basement. They do not hear what is happening on the floors above. This section is purely for the benefit of the Gamemaster, so that they are aware of what has happened.

At midnight on February 26th, Nicholas Laughton appears at the front gate and rings the doorbell. Leonore Isenburg wakes up and lets him in. He explains that he is being hunted and needs somewhere to hide - he has murdered someone and the police already know.

Leonore is furious that he's brought the police to her door. She informs him that she has nowhere to hide him (she does not want to risk the Weisz sisters being found in the basement) and asks him to leave. He refuses to do so and states that he knows she has a safe hiding place in her home. While they argue, the police, on the hunt for Laughton, arrive at the house. They kick the door in and arrest Laughton.

Isenburg is also seized for questioning, accused of harboring a criminal. The two of them are brought to the Gestapo's headquarters in Charlottenburg. Laughton is of particular interest, being the best suspect in Jaeger's murder. Both are collected in the morning by a prisoner transport from Gestapo.

Max Wester is familiar with Isenburg, but is surprised to find her still in Berlin. He hopes to extract useful information from her, then transform her into an obedient servant. Both Isenburg and Laughton are brought to the Bethania hospital. They are marked for immediate "interrogation".

The agents arrive at Isenburg's home

Bauer and the three British agents arrive at Isenburg's home, at the earliest, just before dawn. Both Laughton and Isenburg have already disappeared. The Weisz sisters awaken around the same time and discover that Isenburg is nowhere to be found. Charlotte and Erna know George Patel, so they can trust each other upon meeting. They will likely investigate what has happened, but there's not much evidence to go on. The muddy footprints from a man's shoe upon the kitchen floor and the fallen chair suggest some sort of struggle took place.

The characters may ask around in the neighborhood. The house south of Isenburg's is a derelict wooden bungalow built in the Swiss style. It houses about twenty refugees from Allenstein that hid in the basement throughout the night. A pompous white stucco building is located to the north, owned by SS-Hauptsturmführer Wolff. His wife Karoline and their two sons, Anton and Wilhem, 9 and 12 years old, can be found in the home. They were hiding in the basement during the bomb raid, but their handyman Moritz, a gangly bald headed man, informs the player characters that he saw cars outside of Isenburg's house an hour or two after midnight. It was dark, so he couldn't see who was there, but he did hear shouting. "I thought it strange that they were out in the midst of a bomb raid," he says. He believes that a man and a woman may have been taken outside from the house.

Throughout the day, no less than six Gestapo agents, led by Vincent Busch, will arrive at Isenburg's house looking for evidence. The characters will not be able to stay any longer than the early afternoon, unless they wish to run straight into the long arm of the law. If they tail the Gestapo agents, they will end up outside Gestapo headquarters on Prinz-Albrecht-Straße.

The Weisz sisters in Berlin

Bauer can arrange papers for Charlotte and Erna Weisz at his office in Neukölln. He has a small number of false papers at his disposal when required. Once the sisters have their false papers identifying them as the Schlossmans (see their character sheets) they can accompany the other characters without risk. Berlin is full of refugees from East Prussia, so two young women from this area don't arouse suspicion.

THE LIST OF CONTACTS FROM MI6

The characters have a list of MI6 contacts in Berlin that should be able to assist them, should Laughton not be found at Isenburg's home. It is their best chance of finding out what happened to him. The scenes listed below are not meant to be played out in any particular order. The GM might not even use all of them depending on what the characters get up to, but in order to find Laughton and find out what he was up to they must visit some of the people named on the list. The GM should also feel free to add smaller scenes to show Berlin slipping into Inferno - nothing overt, just unusual things that build the tension and weirdness.

THE MURDER OF LEON JAEGER

Leon Jaeger was, until February 1944, Nicholas Laughton's main contact within Abwehr. After the dissolution of the intelligence service, he was transferred to the army and was sent to Belarus, where he sustained grievous injuries and lost his left leg. He returned home to his apartment near Savignyplatz in November. Laughton found him late in the evening on the 26th of February. Laughton beat Jaeger to death, destroyed the paperwork that exposed him as a double agent, and then set the furniture on fire. Unfortunately, the neighbors heard him. They peeked into the stairwell just in time to see Laughton flee the scene. His car was parked on the street below, as was a patrol car belonging to the public order police (orpo). The officers received Laughton's description from Mrs. Bunke, one of the neighbors, and chased after the double agent. Laughton drove to Zehlendorf, thinking he had lost his pursuers. He parked a few houses away from Lenore Isenburg's home and went to ask her for help. It was here the orpo found his car.

The police checked the nearby houses until they found and arrested Laughton at Isenburg's residence. When the officers reported that Jaeger's murderer had been arrested, their superiors contacted the Gestapo. Max Wester recognized Isenberg immediately, and further suspected that Laughton knew too much about Jaeger.

Friedrich Kindermanns place of employment, Flakturm 1

The characters are informed that Laughton's Luftwaffe contact has been murdered.

Flakturm 1 is one of the city's combined anti-aircraft towers and bunkers, a massive square concrete building painted green that measures 75 meters on all sides and 40 meters in height. It looks like a medieval fortress, with anti-aircraft turrets on the roof. It has housing for soldiers, a hospital wing, a vault containing Berlin's most important pieces of art, and a massive bunker that fits thousands of civilians. Ammunition is kept in basement storage t. Napalm has decimated the surrounding areas. A culvert with cables is drawn from the central block at G-Turm to a smaller cement block (L-Turm) with a radio locator fitted to the roof, where the commanding officers' quarters are located. This is where lieutenant Friedrich Kindermann used to work. He was contacted by Laughton on the evening of the 26th of February, a few hours before the air raid. They met for a walk in what remains of Tiergarten. Laughton shot Kindermann and left him in the ruins a short distance from L-Turm. He was going to hide the body among the rubble in Tiergarten, but was spotted by a military patrol and was forced to leave before he could properly dispose of the body. Unfortunately for Laughton, the body was discovered the following morning.

During bomb raids, the bunker is filled with civilians, though many civilians choose to remain within the bunker even when there are no bombs falling over the city. The characters can go there without needing to identify themselves. To access any other part of the building, especially the commanding officer's quarters, they must provide identification and a justifiable reason for their visit. If they cannot think of something themselves the GM can inform Bauer that he, as a Volkssturm officer, could have arranged a meeting with Kindermann to discuss a matter of some sort. The bunker designated for the commanding officers is enormous, with walls that are at least three meters thick and enclosed with reinforced steel doors. The area is entirely staffed by the Luftwaffe.

The characters are received at a small office by sergeant major Gerhard Scholl, a short and broad man with a bald head, who asks them what their business is. When they ask for Kindermann, they are met with surprise. "Haven't heard? He's dead!". They are informed that Kindermann was found shot outside of the bunker early in the morning of 27 February, executed by a single shot to the neck.

If the characters fail to get Scholl to talk, but still look for information on the two murders (see below), Bauer can find out the information presented above through his contacts in Volkssturm.

Leon Jaeger's apartment, Savignyplatz

The PCs realize that Laughton murdered two ex-Abwehr officers and destroyed incriminating documentation. They also encounter a lictor.

Leon Jaeger lived in an undamaged building near Savignyplatz in west Berlin, about a ten minute walk from Flakturm 1. The apartment, originally a six bedroom flat with an atrium-esque hall, has been split in two. The Bunke family live in the right half, which encompasses the old service quarters and a guest room. Jaeger lived in the left half. Mrs. Sandra Bunke cooked for Jaeger and knew him fairly well. She and Dorothea, her daughter, heard strange noises and called the police on the night of the murder. The Bunkes can provide the characters with some information about Jaeger, but don't know anything that would assist them in their search for Laughton.

When the characters arrive at the apartment, the police are still investigating. The lead officer is an unusually tall and muscular constable, Heinrich Müller. He's trying to determine why the killer set fire to Jaeger's apartment. George Patel will immediately notice, and Erna Weisz may suspect that Müller is in fact, a lictor. His shadow is abnormally large, even for him, and his shadow seems to pause before it moves.

The Lictor is one of the Archon Kether's servants. He managed to remain in Berlin even after Thaumiel's extreme influence in the city. He now waits, like all others, for the Nazi regime to fall, but he is still worried about what the Nazis are plotting. Müller is extremely frustrated by the fact that he can't find the rumored occult torture center run by the Gestapo. When he found out that Gestapo's specialists "took care" of Isenburg and Laughton, he ramped up his investigation to a frantic pace. In his hunt for clues, he stumbled across Jaeger's apartment.

Müller is initially unaware that the characters are Allied agents, but his centuries of experience reading people means he poses a significant risk to their covers. Luckily, he has no interest in handing them over to the Gestapo or SS. He hopes that they'll be able to help him and may even provide them with some information to see what they do with it. The PCs find out that the murderer burned paperwork that Jaeger had saved from his time at the Abwehr and the police have reasonable suspicion that Jaeger and his killer were, at the very least, acquaintances. If the PCs somehow manage to win the Lictor's trust, he'll share that the Gestapo seized Laughton and Isenburg. However, he doesn't know where they are being held.

Else Ingerselben, Haus des Rundfunks

The characters learn that Laughton is a double agent and that Gestapo has a secret torture center for occult dissidents. Perhaps it is located in Kreuzberg?

Else Ingersleben works at Haus des Rundfunks, the massive radio station at Masurenallee. The radio serves under Goebbels and regurgitates increasingly bizarre propaganda as the end of the war creeps closer. Ingersleben is skilled at writing texts that skirt the line of good taste, but can easily be interpreted as comical by listeners. Paradoxically, this seems to be good for morale. She is also a Soviet agent, who was duped by Laughton; she gave him two names of agents serving under her. They disappeared in the summer of 1944.

The characters can find Ingersleben in the enormous office building that houses the radio station. The large entrance opens up to a handsome entrance hall that is three storeys tall, topped by a glass roof. Ingersleben has a small office on the second floor. She is suspicious of the PCs at first – and for good reason. The radio station, serving under the Ministry for Propaganda, is a place where the walls have ears and the characters must find a discreet way to arrange a meeting with her. When they can speak openly, Ingersleben tells them that two of her contacts, the radio host Franz Krause and the postman Moritz Bieber, were arrested in the summer of 1944 after she introduced them to Laughton (whom she knows as Lucas Smets, but she is aware this is only an alias). She believes that they were brought to a special torture chamber that she has heard rumors about, where Gestapo keeps "valuable" prisoners. Nobody has left the place. She has no idea where it is, but she heard rumors from a few contacts who followed a Gestapo prisoner transport. They were stopped at a roadblock by Köpenicker Strasse, where they lost the transport. However, it appeared to turn towards Kreuzberg.

Ingersleben can sense that time is running out, and doubts that she has much of a future within NKVD (the Soviet secret service). There's a great risk that her work for the German propaganda machine will sentence her to death after the war. She offers to hand over her Soviet web of contacts to MI6 if the characters promise to smuggle her out of Berlin to the Allied side.

If the characters choose to trust Ingersleben, she can assist them in their search for Laughton and Isenburg. She has plenty of contacts in the city and, as a known radio personality, she can gain access to places that might otherwise be impossible for the PCs to enter.

Stefan Goretti, the Italian embassy

The characters see how closely Berlin and Inferno are to each other, and realize that the Gestapo has caught wind of the individuals on MI6's list. More pieces of evidence point towards Kreuzberg.

Goretti Kaffee has an office and store room on Müllerstraße in Wedding, but it is quiet. Not a single grain of coffee has been imported to the city since the beginning of 1944. The bored stock manager, Udo Brink, is a skeletal man with sad eyes who tells the characters that the owner can be found at the Italian embassy. "He's trying to arrange for us to leave the city," Udo says.

The Italian embassy in Berlin, a flashy neo-classical building, was completed in 1942, but was bombed just a month later. The embassy has been haphazardly restored. The windows on the lower levels have been walled up, and a row of small windows below the roof gape open like empty eye sockets facing the street below. In 1943, very little remains of fascist Italy, with its last bastion being the Salo republic in the north where Mussolini hides away until the end of April. It is this minuscule state that has their embassy by Tiergartenstraße, just across the street from the large central park where almost all the trees have been chopped down for firewood.

A doomsday party rages within the embassy, where both alcohol and drugs flow freely. Fires are burning in open braziers in the Roman courtyard, and an orgy seethes and roils in the partially ruined meeting room. In the Italian embassy, the Illusion has opened up completely towards Inferno, and the area surrounding Thaumiel's citadel. The courtyard opens onto a burning battlefield underneath a black sky. The fortifications surrounding the Angel of Death's citadel glimmer in the distance and some of the guests at the embassy are not human, though they have assumed human forms.

A guard dressed in a toga and armed with a submachine gun addresses the characters. He informs them that this is Italian territory and asks their business. He only wants to ensure that they are not here to stir up more trouble or stop the party, and that they have money or other resources that can be of use to the embassy. With some effort, the PCs (and any NPCs they've brought with them) may be able to coax him to let them enter. Bribes always work.

Goretti is at the embassy to requisition a vehicle and paperwork allowing for himself and his employees to be evacuated to a city closer to the Allied border. The ambassador is not sober enough at the present to receive him, and he is waiting in a smaller room alongside two other Italian business men, Niccolo Babbri and Dino Moretti, fascists seeking help to get their families extracted from the Salo republic before it falls.

When the characters are at the embassy to meet with Goretti, Laughton has let Goretti's name slip and the Gestapo are now looking to collect him and bring him to the Bethania hospital. When the characters have had a chance to speak with Goretti, they can hear a violent commotion by the entrance where the Italian guards are trying to hold the Gestapo officers off. They can hear angry voices and the words "Goretti", "Gestapo", and "arrest warrant". Goretti panics and tries to escape. The characters can try to help him, but it will not be easy. The windows on the lower floor have been walled in, and only Inferno can be reached from the courtyard. There's a side entrance from Hohenzollernstraße (now known as Hiroshimastraße) which is guarded by two armed men. The characters can dupe, bribe, threaten, or shoot their way out.

If the characters help Goretti, even if they do so discreetly, they will attract the attention of the Gestapo. If spotted, they are flagged as "people of interest". If they let the Gestapo seize Goretti, they will still be in a difficult position in a few days, when the Italian tries to save his own skin. They may attempt to follow the Gestapo officers that arrest Goretti. However, this requires the PCs to have access to a vehicle, or they will quickly lose sight of the officers. The Gestapo officers throw the Italian in the back of a black Mercedes and drive along Tiergartenstraße, across Potsdamer Platz and through the city center, to Köpenicker Straße and then right towards Mariannenplatz and the Bethania hospital. The characters are stopped in a roadblock at Oranienstraße, where they can see the car turn into Kreuzberg and disappear. Usually Bauer can get through the roadblocks, but the guards ask his business ("we are following the black Mercedes" is not a good answer). When the characters manage to get through the roadblock, the black car has disappeared. Nobody wants to answer any questions about where it has gone.

What does Goretti know? He has not met with Laughton for over a month, but is aware of certain rumors. He's heard from other businessmen that the Gestapo requisitioned slave labor from factories and has collected people via transports that pass through central Berlin. Recently, they appear to have given specific orders to the guards located at the roadblocks in and surrounding Kreuzberg.

The Gestapo Reacts

The characters risk drawing attention to themselves by asking the wrong questions or saving Goretti.

After a few days, Mrs. Isenburg will start talking under torture, and inform Gestapo of the Weisz sisters to try to save herself. When the Gestapo learn that Erna Weisz is gifted in the occult arts, Max Wester wants to get his hands on her. His men will start searching for the sisters and, though indirectly, for the other PCs. If George Patel drops his cover, Wester will become even more eager to capture them. The GM can choose how this develops, but it shouldn't prevent the characters from getting to the Bethania hospital. If the Gestapo confronts them, it should be possible for them to bribe or bluff their way out. A confrontation with the Gestapo also provides an excellent source of information. The characters hear the officers talking about reporting to "Wester". Some investigating will reveal that this refers to Max Wester, an old acquaintance of both Patel and Isenburg.

What's going on at Kreuzberg?

Finding out where the Gestapo has brought Laughton and Isenburg is not a simple matter. Naturally, the torture chambers in Metropolis are kept secret, and the Gestapo have made sure to collaborate with the public order police in eastern Kreuzberg. The officers have received orders to report anything suspicious, and to stop everyone that does not have any specific reason or business in the area surrounding the hospital. Employees at the Gestapo's headquarters at Prinz-Albrecht-Straße know that the department for special interrogation techniques, operating under Max Wester, is located in Bethania, but very few are aware that occultists are responsible for the torture itself.

The simplest way to locate the Bethania is to 'follow the opposition'. Kreuzberg is mentioned by both Ingersleben and Goretti. When the characters start investigating the district, they are met with a lot of suspicion from the police. The public police wear friendlier green uniforms, but they work under and follow the commands of the SS.

Felix Bauer may use his contacts and find out what is going on. He is acquainted with Hauptmann Rudi Martes, a ranking officer within the police, and can arrange to meet with him at his office. The police in Kreuzberg operate from a massive complex of brick buildings that formerly functioned as military barracks. Through small talk, pleasantries, an appropriate level of deception, and perhaps a bribe or two, Bauer may find out that the Gestapo are running a very strange operation at the Bethania, a hospital by Mariannenplatz. They bring prisoners of war to the hospital, mostly Russian women and workers, who disappear without a trace. Prisoners go in, but only the Gestapo comes out. Martens knows that the leader for this operation is a man by the name of Max Wester.

The characters may also overhear police officers talking about the "strange Gestapo office in the old nurses' quarters". Everyone is afraid of the Gestapo, and in order to find out anything concrete or useful the characters must be prepared to bribe people, get them drunk, or otherwise coax the information out of them.

If the PCs fail to get the information from conversations and bribes, they may also stake out the Gestapo headquarters at Prinz-Albrecht-Straße. They can then be given an opportunity to follow a prisoner transport to Kreuzberg. This should be considered a last resort, but it works. Another last ditch effort could be to enlist help from the Lictor, Herr Müller.

THE BETHANIA IN KREUZBERG

The hospital is the size of an entire city block. It faces Mariannenplatz, a long and narrow park in the mostly-intact working class district Kreuzberg. The hospital is a whitewashed building that is three storeys high, with a lavish entrance flanked by two decorative towers.

Parts of the building have crumbled, but the establishment is still a working hospital, primarily caring for injured soldiers. Men with bandaged eyes wander the corridors or sit in two-person rooms jammed with six beds. As members of the Volkssturm and the Red Cross, the characters should not face any difficulties getting into the Bethania in Elysium.

Upon entering the hospital, Erna and George will immediately notice that there's something very special about the place. Patel, who can see through the Illusion in thin places, senses Metropolis like a shadow just beyond the whitewashed walls. Erna can tell that the building is protected by something that is several magnitudes stronger than what protected Isenburg's home - the Gestapo occultists have, despite grand sacrificial rites on both sides of the veil, not managed to break down the angels' strong protection of the area.

The strangest thing the PCs notice is that one of the seven sisters in residence is, in fact, a fallen angel. To most people, she appears as a wiry woman in her thirties. Something about her, though, is deeply magnetic. To George and Erna, the woman only appears human at first. If the PCs can look past the Illusion, they see that her lips have been cut off, and she has open wounds all over her body that would be fatal to any human. She has wings on her back that have turned black and diseased.

The angel calls herself Sister Felicia and asks if the characters have cigarettes. She brings them to the courtyard between the hospital buildings where they can speak in private. Felicia views the characters as her unlikely, yet not impossible, chance of getting rid of the Gestapo. She wants to know who the PCs are and what they are doing at the Bethania, but she doesn't fully trust them. If they exchange information as a quid pro quo, The PCs can get her to reveal pretty much everything that can be found under the "Diakonissen-Krankenhaus Bethania" under the background section for the scenario.

Sister Felicia tells them that Laughton and Isenburg are in Metropolis. They can get to Metropolis through the basement in Feierabendhaus, where the Gestapo commander Max Wester has his office, or if they can get to Metropolis in other ways, they can do so directly from the Bethania (Patel is able to do so using the ritual on p. 59). When Felicia finds out that the characters want the prisoners, she will offer to broker a deal between the PCs and the angels: "Kill Max, and bring him to us. In that case we will not try to stop you. But the prisoners down there belong to us. Max gave them to us and we can't simply hand them over to you. Everything has a price. You may have one of them for one of you. And we are very generous. We will collect you only once your time is up. A reasonable offer, don't you think?". She informs them that Wester can often be found in Metropolis at night, when the prisoners are being tortured. The Gestapo also performs sacrifices to Thaumiel there. The easiest way to access both the prisoners and Wester is to go into Metropolis.

If the characters do not want to go directly to the corrupted angels, they can speak with the human nuns. If the characters want to find the hospital director, they are directed to a man named Georg Franke. He is a short, tired man in his mid-sixties, originally an obstetrician. Like the majority of the nuns, he's upset by the Gestapo's presence at the hospital and is increasingly panicked by the realization that the people brought to the Gestapo offices through the mysterious prisoner transports never return. Franke, the nuns, and the nurses can tell that something is going on, but they are not certain what that is.

THE HOSPITAL IN OUR REALITY

[1] The hospital's entrance hall has high ceilings and is decorated with pillars and Roman archways. Parts of the ceiling have crumbled, and the floor is damaged. Stairways on both sides lead to the hospital wings. The path leading straight ahead leads to the staff canteen and the patients' rooms on the lower level. The characters are met by Nurse Martha, a human who asks their business. She will leave them to their own devices once she receives a reasonable answer.

[2] Staff canteen and common room. The hospital's canteen looks like a chapel, with painted arches and vaulted windows, mostly shuttered or walled in, facing the courtyard between the hospital buildings. The room has a remnant of holiness attached to it. Tired doctors and nurses can be found resting at various tables. The angel Felicia is sitting by a cracked, but still intact, window.

[3] Corridors and hospital rooms across three storeys.

[4] In the farthest end of the ground floor, next to the surgery in the eastern ranges of the hospital, is the office of the Hospital Director Georg Franke (see above). He can occasionally be found sleeping here on a sofa.

[5] The hospital park is severely damaged by bombs and many of the trees have been chopped down for firewood or building materials.

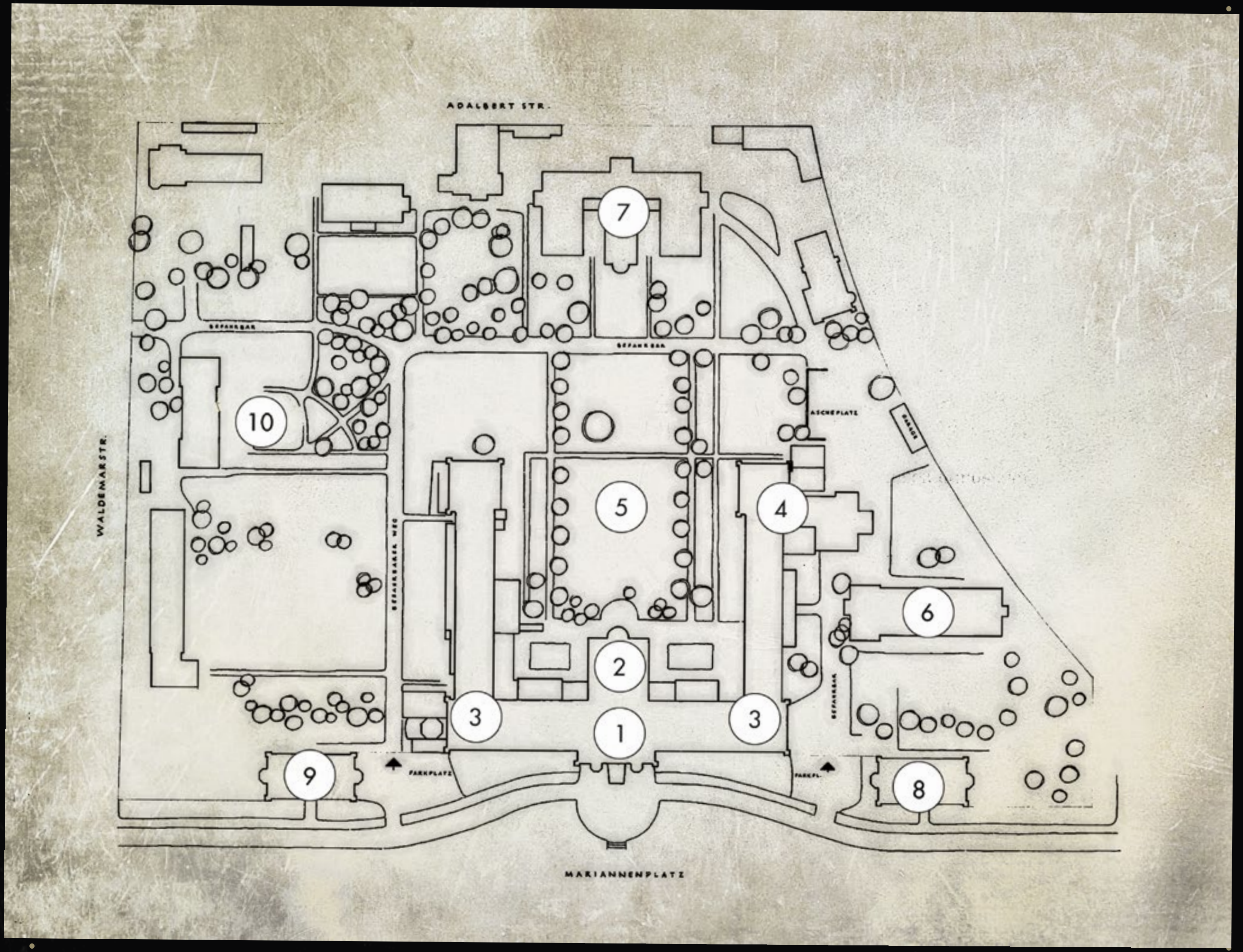
[6] Nurses' quarters.

[7] Nurses' seminary.

[8] Service housing.

[9] Administration.

[10] Feierabendhaus (currently houses the Gestapo's department for interrogations, see below).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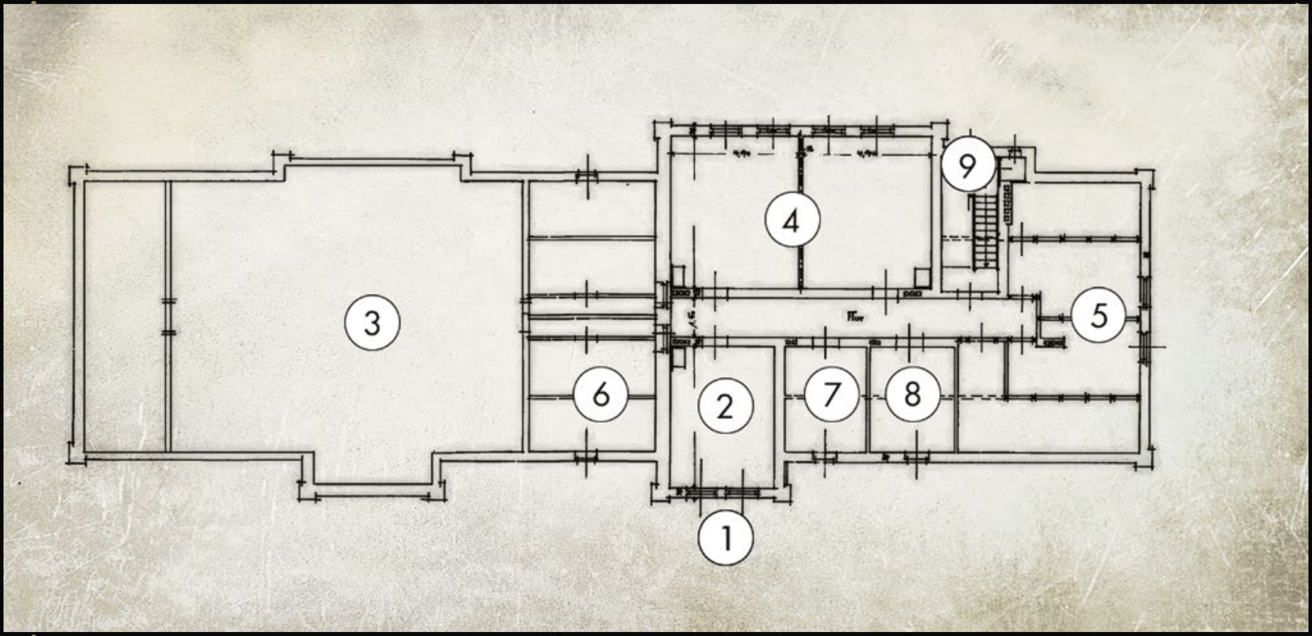
The Hospital Grounds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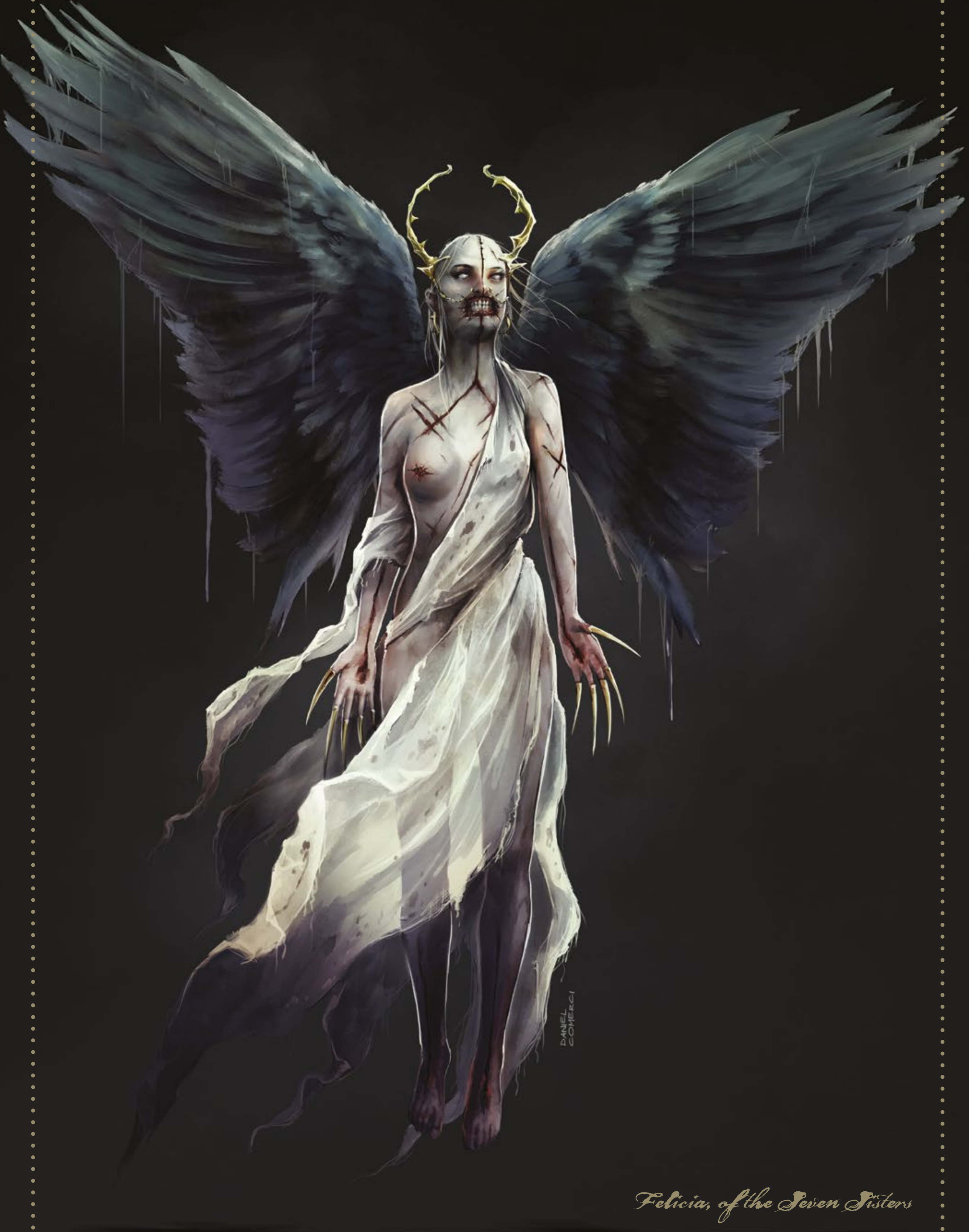
The Gestapo's house


DANIEL COMERCI

Felicia, of the Seven Sisters

The Gestapo's house

Entering the two storey brick structure that houses the Gestapo's occult department will not be a simple matter. The main entrance is guarded by two Gestapo officers armed with automatic rifles (Sturmgewehr 44) who will shoot suspicious strangers without question. All of the windows on the ground floor are walled in. Max Wester can be found inside of the building alongside a couple of his assistants. A staircase in the basement leads straight to the torture chambers in Metropolis.

[1] Entrance. A short staircase leads to a sturdy door made from reinforced wood. Two guards are always on guard, day and night, armed with assault rifles and handguns.

[2] The hallway has the same Roman arches and decorated ceilings as the ones found in the hospital's main building, but these are even more severely damaged.

[3] Common room and canteen. Two large dining room tables and a smaller serving table dominate the space. Two kitchen hands are stationed in the kitchen just beyond the canteen. They are displeased with the arrangement, but do not wish to talk or be disturbed - especially not by outsiders.

[4] Max Wester's office. Wester has an office, with a large couch where he tends to sleep, and a small meeting room. If the characters decide to attempt the riskier solution to get to Wester, this is where he will bring George Patel for a private conversation. Documentation covering information of both staff and prisoners is kept here.

[5] Assistants' quarters. Wester has three assistants - Busch, Kuhlmann and Fuchs - whose rooms can be found here. If the Gestapo is suspicious of the PCs, these assistants are on the case. Busch is a doctor and interrogation specialist. All three have been trained in the occult arts and are sworn to Thaumiel.

[6] Guard quarters. Four guards read books, play card games, or relax here while waiting to rotate shifts with the two out front.

[7] Archive. A detailed archive with material from the specific interrogation department's four year history. By going through these, one can learn that hundreds of prisoners have been brought here. Currently there are only four prisoners held at the institution.

[8] Clerk. Dietmar Hahn records statements, injuries to prisoners, casualties, and anything else that may be of interest. He is not trained in the occult arts, but is deeply attached to Max Wester.

[9] Escher-esque staircase. Two men armed with Sturmgewehr rifles and automatic pistols are guarding the stairwell. Ascending the staircase leads the PCs to perfectly ordinary lodgings on the upper floor. Going down towards the basement, the PCs end up walking down the stairs from the upper level, but in the headquarters's twin located in Metropolis. By continuing downwards via the basement steps, from the building in Metropolis the PCs return to our reality, via the stairs from the upper level.

There are bunks for all 18 men stationed at the Gestapo special projects headquarters. Most have homes in Berlin, but over the last two months Wester has demanded that they remain at work. There is no map covering the upper level, but a number of small rooms with simple furnishings can be found here (a single bed, a small table, and a stool).

For fire safety reasons, the building's attic has been abandoned and evacuated.

Three Suggestions To Complete The Mission

In order to safely extract Laughton and Isenburg, the characters must kill Max Wester and give one of their own to the angels for each prisoner they want to free. The PCs might not want to bring Laughton back to London, but the mission requires that he can't be interrogated by the Gestapo, so at the very least Max Wester's operations in Metropolis must be shut down. Here are three suggestions for doing so. If the players think of better ideas, they can do those instead. If they want heavier weapons Felix Bauer can fetch hand grenades (model 24) and rifles (Carabine 98K) from the Volkssturm stores in the old printworks in Neukölln.

PATEL BRINGS THE CHARACTERS TO METROPOLIS

George Patel can open gates to Metropolis. He uses a technique that Leonore Isenburg taught him, which requires constructing a ramshackle labyrinth of symbols and images in our reality. These gradually break down the veils of the Illusion. It will take 2-3 hours for him to construct the labyrinth that opens a path from the Bethania to Metropolis. He can bring up to five others with him through the labyrinth. If Erna Weisz assists him by keeping an eye on those that are walking last in line, he can bring up to eight people through. Those who pass through the labyrinth see how our reality is gradually fragmented and how images of the Bethania's past appear before them - a muddy field in the 17th century, a newly constructed hospital surrounded by empty plots of land in all directions, a growing city - until they arrive at the eternal city. If they arrive at night time, Max Wester, Busch, Fuchs, and Hahn can be found in the hospital park in Metropolis.

THE CHARACTERS STORM THE GESTAPO OFFICES

It's also possible to access Metropolis by going through the house where Max Wester has his office, but this would be a riskier operation. If they do so during the day the Gestapo officers may call for backup from the police, which are located just a block away. If the PCs are clever, they can coordinate their attack with a bomb raid on the city. In that case, the offices are hit by a smaller bomb that causes the roof to crumble, taking out the men on the upper level. Max Wester, Busch, Fuschs and Hahn are in Metropolis at night, so the characters do not have to face off against them if they plan their attack at night.

GEORGE PATEL LETS HIMSELF BE CAPTURED

A suicidal solution, perhaps, is to have Bauer act as if he has captured George Patel and hand him over to Max Wester. If Patel plays a convincing role as "student of magic" he can convince Wester that he is only interested in releasing Isenburg, and is otherwise indifferent to what is going on. He may then have a tête-à-tête with Wester in his office to discuss the matter, an opportunity that may be used to murder him. Of course, there are plenty of ways this could go awry.

The Bethania in Metropolis

The simplest route to Metropolis runs straight through the Illusion within the hospital. The Illusion is crumbling all over Berlin, but while the rest of the city opens up towards Inferno, the Bethania opens up towards Metropolis. George Patel can create a path to Metropolis, Leonore Isenburg taught him how (see above). The ideal opportunity to do this is at night, when the Illusion is at its weakest. It will take him 3-4 hours to perform and complete this ritual. It will be easier if Erna Weisz helps him.

The entirety of the hospital grounds are present in Metropolis. The buildings are intact and seemingly taller and brighter here in comparison to Kreuzberg in the 1940s. There's a garden with blossoming fruit trees in the courtyard by the main building, just behind the nuns' canteen. The ruins of Metropolis tower around the hospital, impossibly tall and lifeless against the darkened sky. The idyllic hospital gardens are ruined by piles of corpses, the bodies of emaciated men and women in striped prison uniforms, left behind after the Nazi occultist's sacrificial rites in an attempt to break the angels' protection of the institution. The occultists do not like the idea of having an open door to Metropolis in the middle of Berlin, even if they control it at present.

The Hospital in Metropolis

[1] The pillars of the entranceway are intact in Metropolis. An odd light fills the hall and the pillars glisten with silver and gold symbols. There is powerful magic that binds the institution in our reality and the one in Metropolis to one another. An abstract sculpture made from glass and steel stands in the middle of the hall; it looks a bit like algae or a fungus.

[2] The canteen in Metropolis is almost completely empty, save for a small dining table by the window with seven seats for the angels. Everything is clean and untouched by strife and war. There are oil paintings depicting idyllic scenes of Berlin before the war.

[3] The corridors and halls are entirely empty of people, but more paintings decorate the walls and small statuettes and other pieces of art are scattered about. It looks more akin to an art gallery than a hospital.

[4] The hospital park in Metropolis has been touched by the same sacred beauty as the buildings themselves, with blossoming fruit trees and small gatherings of sculptures. The pleasant surroundings are tainted by the piles of corpses in striped prison uniforms. A small altar dedicated to the angel of death, cast from cement and branded with a theta for Thaumiel, has been erected in the gardens just behind the hospital canteen. Max Wester, Busch, Fuchs, and Hahn can be found here if the PCs arrive at night.

The Gestapo's house in Metropolis

The torture chambers exist in the Metropolis mirror of the Gestapo's canteen. There are no guards armed with automatic rifles here, just four of the corrupted angels. The angels will not support either party should a battle ensue. Nicholas Laughton and Leonore Isenburg are kept inside, grievously injured, alongside Ingersleben's colleague Franz Krause and a Russian woman accused of espionage, Svetlana Jigarova.

[1] Entrance. The angel Martha sits here, smoking.

[2] The hallway is splattered red with blood.

[3] Torture chamber. The corrupted angels' interrogation room is a medieval torture chamber with tongs, knives, and everything else one might expect to find in such a place. Nicholas Laughton can be found here, tied to a chair which is nailed to the floor, with a bag over his head.

[4] Max Wester's room is occasionally used for overnight stays. There are four single beds in the room.

[5] Jail cells. Isenburg is kept in a cell, alongside Krause. Jigarova is kept separately. All three are in very poor condition, and Krause is completely dissociated and muttering to himself after eight months of ceaseless torture.

[6] The guard quarters are empty

[7] The archive is empty.

[8] The clerk's room is empty

[9] Escher-esque staircase. The basement stairs lead to our reality, the staircase leading to the upper floor leads to the angels' rooms. The seven angels dwell upstairs, when they are not visiting our reality. The floors of the former nurses' offices (now the Gestapo bunks in the Illusion) are covered with torn bible pages with underlined passages. Here the angels try to remember the Demiurge and their former identities. The beds are neatly made and delicate lace curtains flutter around the windows. It is a pathetic, almost childish display of goodness.

The Angels' Demands

If the characters kill Max Wester, the seven angels will come to negotiate the terms of the prisoners' release. The seven are called Sisters Felicia, Martha, Sara, Olga, Julia, Katarina, and Frieda. They no longer remember their purpose and are so tainted by Thaumiel's influence that they cannot imagine handing the prisoners over to the characters without a sacrifice, or allow them to leave on their own recognizance. They want one of the PCs to allow themselves to be taken by the angels upon their death. The Gamemaster determines how willing any NPCs (who may have accompanied the players) are to sell themselves to save another. Goretti is not especially willing to sacrifice himself to help others, but Ingersleben may be willing to trade places with either Krause or Jigarova.

If the characters try to attack the angels they will probably suffer, but not die. The angels are not able to kill humans. In this case, the mad angels will leave the players battered and broken, take the screaming prisoners with them, and walk out into Metropolis to continue torturing them for eternity. Otherwise the characters will receive the prisoners they bargain for. The last the PCs see of the angels is their cruel smiles as they drag Wester and his associates down into Inferno and to the citadel of Thaumiel, their master.

Aftermath

Finally, the characters can return back to our reality. The safest way is, paradoxically, to return via Metropolis. Leonore Isenburg knows of a path out of Berlin through the eternal city. It's possible to continue on to London from here. Otherwise they can try to get to the Allied front through the Illusion, or lie low in Berlin. Ingersleben, should she be there, will offer to safely take them beyond the Soviet front.

No matter where they go, the Seven Sisters of the Bethania will always remember them.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

NICHOLAS LAUGHTON

48 years old. A British spy working for MI6, and double agent for the Abwehr. An unremarkable-looking man who can communicate fluently in English, German, French, and Dutch. Has spread disinformation to the British and provided the Germans with useful intel since he switched sides in 1941. In Berlin he operated under the name Lucas Smets and claimed to be a Belgian citizen. Everyone in Berlin refers to him as Herr Smets. He is now held captive in the Gestapo's torture chambers in Metropolis.

LEONORE ISENBURG

76 years old. One of the last remaining occultists from the Bauhaus circle in Berlin. George Patel's mentor and teacher. She has protected her home in Zehlendorf through occult means, which has kept it safe from both bombs and thieves. Also held captive by Gestapo at the start of the scenario.

HEINRICH MÜLLER

Apparently in his 60s. Constable and Lictor.

GERHARD SCHOLL

35 years old. A short and stout man that is trying to maintain a good mood. Will happily be treated to a drink and some food. Sergeant major in Luftwaffe, stationed in Flakturm 1 by Tiergarten. Acquaintance of the murdered lieutenant Friedrich Kindermann.

ELSE INGERSLEBEN

36 years old. A scrawny blonde woman with a tired and tortured look in her eyes. She is dressed neatly and is, under the circumstances, looking very well-kept. She works for the German radio, in the radio station located in the western parts of Berlin. Her home at Frankfurter Allée was destroyed in December, and she has been living at work since then. She is the assistant to the radio personality Hermann Meier, for whom she writes parodically patriotic speeches. She's also a Soviet agent who revealed too much to Laughton, resulting in two of her contacts being arrested. She makes good on her word and hands over a list of her contacts and shares all of her information with MI6, so long as she gets asylum in Britain or the USA. She will not, under any circumstances, sell the characters out to the Germans.

STEFAN GORETTI

56 years old. Italian coffee importer, originally from Milan. This once-tubby man is now haggard and harrowed. He has lived in Berlin since the mid-1930s and provided the Allied forces with information regarding German-Italian contacts and relationships since Mussolini's fall from power. Spent a fair bit of time privately with Laughton, leading to his name being mentioned by Laughton while subjected to the Gestapo's torture.

ANTON FUCHS

37 years old. Max Wester's right hand man. Originally from Munich. Occultist and distant acquaintance of both Patel and Isenburg. A lean, chain-smoking man with a stubbly chin.

VINCENT BUSCH

33 years old. A doctor who started his career as a pathologist and was recruited by the Gestapo to develop interrogation techniques. A sadist with narcissist tendencies. He's concerned about the direction Wester is taking the department. Busch is a tall and strong man with a neat haircut and a red scar running across his forehead.

REBUS KUHLMANN

24 years old. A newly recruited forensic assistant. He has some talent for the occult arts and, as such, he was hand-picked by Wester. He has also been given direct orders by Himmler to keep an eye on Wester. Nervous. Tall and blond and smokes like a chimney.

DIETMAR HAHN

29 years old. Clerk. Interested in matters of the occult but doesn't quite understand any of the principles. Admires Wester and obeys him without question. Heavy set with round glasses.

SISTER FELICIA

Apparently in her 30s. Corrupted Angel and nun. She is tall and very charismatic. She has been pierced by iron and she has no lips, but these features are only visible to those who can see through the Illusion. The other six sisters share similar features. See the Seven Sisters below.

German Soldiers

These soldiers serve the dying Nazi regime. Use this template for Gestapo, SS, soldiers of the German army and other fighting men and women in Berlin. Among the soldiers morale is low and they are easily bribed. But the Gestapo close to Max Wester are fiercely loyal. The soldiers have an array of different weapons. The ordinary troops have rifles or submachine guns. While officers have handguns, and the elite troops carry assault rifles.

A group of SS Soldiers are sent out when the plane that dropped the characters by parachute is spotted, and theres a risk that the characters attract their attention while conducting their investigations in Berlin.

Home: Berlin.

Creature type: Human.

Combat [2], **Influence** [1], **Magic** [-].

Combat [Novice]

- Riddle the environment with bullets.
- Search for intruders.

Influence [Weak]

- Call for backup.

Attacks

The guards will, if possible, try to apprehend the enemies and take them to their superiors. But, will otherwise fight with lethal force. They will call on reinforcements and use grenades to drive enemies from cover.

Bayonet/Dagger: Stab [2] [Distance: arm].

Luger (handgun): Aimed shots [2] [Distance: room].

MP 40 (submachine gun): Full auto [2] [Distance: room, field, attacks up to 3 targets in close vicinity to each other].

Sturmgewehr 44 (assault rifle): Controlled fire [3] [Distance: room/field]; Full auto [3] [Distance: room, field, attacks up to 3 targets in close vicinity to each other]; Suppressive fire [2] [Distance: room, **Act Under Pressure** to move or risk Harm].

Karabiner 98k (rifle): Aim & fire [3] [Distance: room/field].

Grenade: Throw [3] [Distance: room, everyone within blast area must **Avoid Harm**].

Wounds & Harm Moves

Wounds (one soldier): ○○ ☠

- Scratches.
- Dying (but continues to fight).
- Death.

Wounds (as small group): ○○○○○○ ☠

- Someone is injured.
- Someone dies.
- One or more soldiers are seriously injured.
- Several dead, many wounded.
- The soldiers are neutralized down to the last man.

The Seven Sisters

Angels who have fallen exceptionally deep into ruin. Their grief has turned to maddened cruelty and they sink ever deeper into Infernal corruption. The will of Thaumiel slowly seeps into them even though they try to resist. Still, they remember their calling to guard the Illusion and mankind, but the taint of the Death Angel has a grip on their hearts. More and more they enjoy the raw and painful power torture gives them over their victims. They try to keep it at bay by pretending to be humans, acting according to the will of a God they no longer remember.

Home: Berlin and Inferno, Metropolis (formerly).

Creature type: Corrupted Angel.

Abilities

- *Mangled Bodies*: All Harm is reduced by 1. The angels mangled bodies just absorbs it.

Weaknesses

- *Bound by Thaumiel*: The Seven Sisters are bound to the will of Thaumiel and slowly corrupted by his principle.
- *No Salvation In Death*: They can't kill humans - instead they are forced to torture and maim them forever.
- *Former Winged Humanoid*: They were once able to fly, but their wings are now broken and blackened.

Combat [2], **Influence** [2], **Magic** [1].

Combat [Novice]

- Cut deep wounds.
- Hold down and inflict pain.

Influence [Novice]

- Blend in among the sisters of the Bethania.
- Unspeakable acts of Torture [-2 to resist].

Magic [Weak]

- Knowledge about the Bethania.

Attacks

Sharp Implement: Cut Deep Wound [2] [Distance: room, the victim cannot die from this attack.]

Unarmed: Clawed hands [1] [Distance: arm, the victim cannot die from this attack.]; Hold down [0] [Distance: arm, **Act Under Pressure** to get free. Or -2 for the rest of the scene when the angel starts to torture the victim.]

Wounds & Harm Moves

Wounds: ○○○○○○○ ☠

- Grits its teeth and keeps on fighting.
- Takes intense pleasure in the pain.
- The angel has a vision of God and screams in madness.
- The angel is overcome with mad rage (**+2 Harm** next Attack).
- Dying (but can be saved).
- Dead.

Max Wester

Max Wester is 45 years old and the director of the Gestapo's occult operations in Kreuzberg. Max is a Death magician sworn to Thaumiel, and an old acquaintance of both Patel's and Isenburg's (the occult circle in Berlin in the 1920s was not especially large). A skinny, clean shaved man who is pleasant and affable. As of a couple of months ago, Max is living in the Gestapo's occult headquarters in the Bethania. He is aspiring to break the Bethania's bonds to Metropolis and bind the fallen angels more closely to him, which he believes will ensure his safety once the war ends.

Home: Berlin.

Creature type: Human.

Abilities

- *Bound to Higher Power*: Max Wester serves the will of the Death Angel Thaumiel.
- *Cool*: All attempts to ***Read a Person*** against Max Wester are at −2.

Combat [3], **Influence** [4], **Magic** [4].

Combat [Considerable]

- Take cover in a tactical position [**+2 Armor**].
- Use someone as a shield.
- Call for reinforcements.

Influence [Powerful]

- Leader of Gestpos' Occult Division.
- Send soldiers after someone.
- Influence the Nazi army.
- Interrogate someone (***Keep it Together*** to resist).

Magic [Powerful]

- Master (IV) in the of the Lore of Death.
- Summon and bind a creature of Death.
- Sense someone's tendency for violence and death.
- Cause harm with a thought.

Attacks

Max is cool headed in combat. He tries to call for reinforcements and will rather make a deal than die needlessly. Since he can sense people's tendencies for violence he often reacts before his opponent has had time to act. He will use his magic power to force people to the ground or try to take a hostage with a gun to that person's head. His bond with the Death Angel has made him hard to kill.

Unarmed: Punch [1] [Distance: arm].

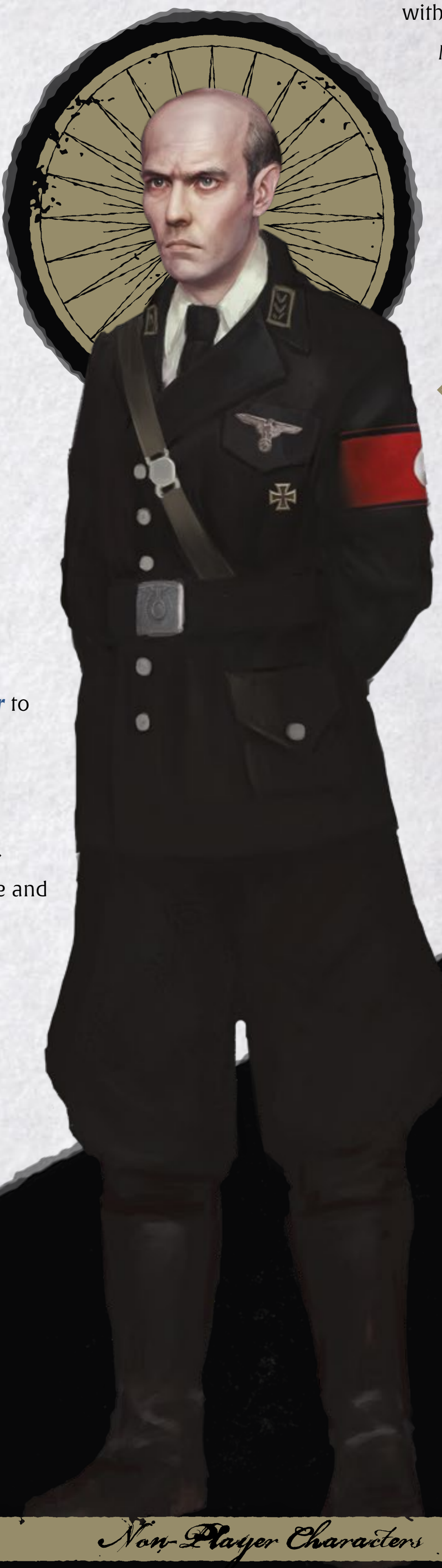
Luger P08 (handgun): Aimed shots [2] [Distance: room]; Body shield [0] [Distance: arm, victim trapped with Max's pistol against their head].

Magic: Cause harm with a thought. [1] [Distance: Room. Up to three victims. The victims must roll for ***Endure Injury***. On a Failure or Partial Success, the victim falls and is forced to remain on the ground].

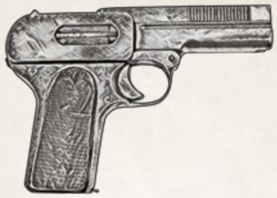
Wounds & Harm Moves

Wounds: ○○○○○○ ☠

- Seems unharmed.
- Lightly wounded.
- Gushes blood.
- A seemingly deadly wound, which doesn't seem to stop him.
- Dying, tries to make a deal.
- Death.



Max Wester



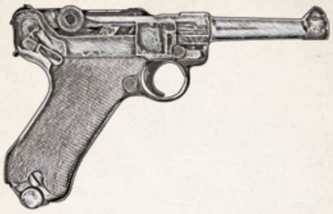
Dreyse M1907 (Handgun)

Distance: arm/room

Attacks:

- Combat shooting [2] [–1 Ammo]
- Overkill [3] [–2 Ammo]
- Multiple targets [2] [hit up to one additional target] [–3 Ammo]

Ammo: ○○○○



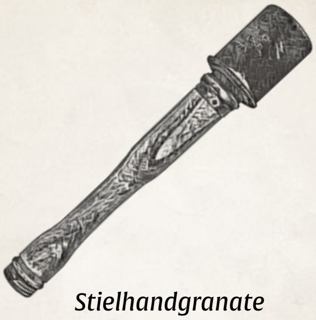
Luger P08 (Handgun)

Distance: arm/room

Attacks:

- Combat shooting [2] [–1 Ammo]
- Overkill [3] [–2 Ammo]
- Multiple targets [2] [hit up to one additional target] [–3 Ammo]

Ammo: ○○○○



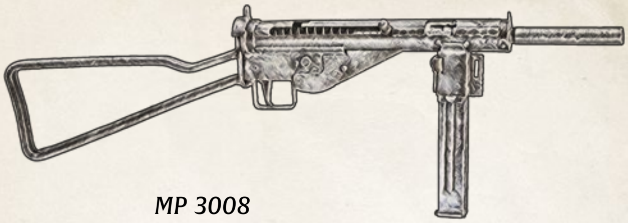
Stielhandgranate (Explosives)

Distance: room/field

Attacks:

- Detonation [4] [hits several targets] [–1 Ammo]

Ammo: ○



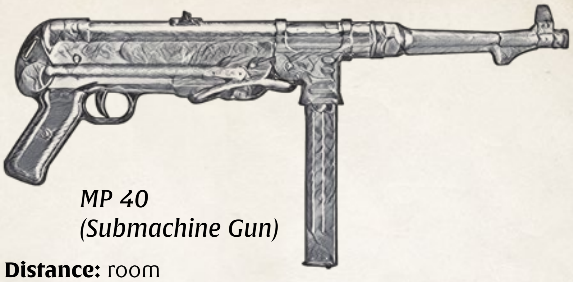
MP 3008 (Submachine Gun)

Distance: room

Attacks:

- Short bursts [2] [–1 Ammo]
- Focused full auto [3] [–2 Ammo]
- Spray and pray [2] [hit up to two additional targets] [–3 Ammo]

Ammo: ○○○



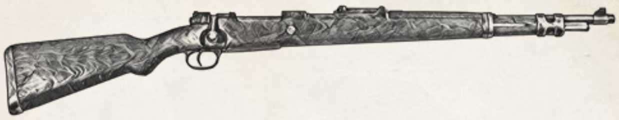
MP 40 (Submachine Gun)

Distance: room

Attacks:

- Short bursts [2] [–1 Ammo]
- Focused full auto [3] [–2 Ammo]
- Spray and pray [2] [hit up to two additional targets] [–3 Ammo]

Ammo: ○○○



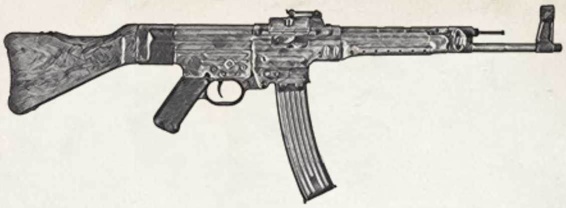
Karabiner 98k (Rifle)

Distance: room/field/horizon

Attacks:

- Aim & fire [3] [–1 Ammo]

Ammo: ○○○



Sturmgewehr 44 (Assault Rifle)

Distance: room/field

Attacks:

- Controlled fire [3] [–1 Ammo]
- Mow down [4] [–2 Ammo]
- Empty the mag [3] [hit up to two additional targets] [–4 Ammo]

Ammo: ○○○○

Contacts in Berlin

Leonore Isenburg, *76 years old. Extraction specialist. Has previously helped people escape Berlin, but her contacts and routes seem to have been closed for a couple of months now. Donnhauserstraße 6. Call and say that you have a delivery that has been delayed.*

Friedrich Kindermann, *42 years. Lieutenant in the Luftwaffe, stationed at Flakturm 1 in Tiergarten. Laughton's contact in the facility. Liaison officer responsible for communication between air defense facilities. Contact in Flakturm 1 L-Turm. State that you spoke to Mrs. Donnermann.*

Else Ingersleben, 32 years. Assistant to Hermann Meier, at Großdeutscher Rundfunk, popular radio voice. Communist. Good contacts with powers inside the Soviet Union. Contact at the workplace, Haus des Rundfunks, Masurenallee. State that you want to discuss the segment about British Bulldogs.

Stefan Goretti, 51 years. Businessman. Imports coffee to Germany through his company Goretti Kaffee. Informant for Italian-German relations. Good contacts at the Italian embassy. Contact Gotthardstraße 48. State that you have information about Mr. Lignotti in Milan.

Handout: Contacts in Berlin.

Labyrinth to the Eternal City

A ritual that creates a labyrinthine pathway through the Illusion that leads to the dark Eternal City of Metropolis. The magician might bring a group of people with her on the journey. This ritual can only be performed in a place where the Illusion is weak. It takes about 3-4 hours to perform.

Preparation [Gives +1 to the Roll if performed]

Fast, both food and water, for a full day (24 Hours).
Or
Wear a blindfold or be in absolute darkness for half a day (12 Hours).

The Ritual:

- Visualize the Eternal City of Metropolis around you.
- Invoke the divine spark within your soul.
- Chant the names of the Archons: *Kether, Chokmah, Binah, Chesed, Geburah, Tiphareth, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malkuth.*
- Whisper the name of the Demiurge: *Yaltabaoth.*
- Build a twisting labyrinth in your mind.
- Adorn the labyrinth with symbols that pierce through the Illusion.
- Visualize several parallel timelines and create a path through the Illusion that is gradually broken down.

Finalization [Roll for Dabbler in the Occult]: Start walking through the labyrinth, with the people you want to bring to the Eternal City.

Effect, if Successful
The magician and the ones that followed her will pierce the Illusion and end up in Metropolis. The Eternal City.

If the roll is not a full success **(15+)** the GM may pick a consequence.

Minor Consequences (10-14): *A powerful creature senses the magician breaking through the Illusion. The path through the labyrinth strains the human mind (everyone loses -2 Stability). One of the people that follow through the labyrinth gets lost. GM decides.*

Major Consequences (-9): *The ritual does not work and the magician is not able to wander through the illusion. The people, and their belongings, age 10 years and everyone loses -2 Stability. A black mist appears in the labyrinth, everyone takes 3 Harm. GM decides.*

Handout: This ritual should be given to George Patel.

George Patel

Age: 37

Background: Born in Amiens, France. Studied art at the Berlin University of the arts in the early 1930s, where he became acquainted with Cecil Drummond. Throughout his time in Berlin he got to know a number of mages from the Bauhaus circle, while also studying the occult arts under Leonore Isenburg, wife to a professor at the academy.

He has lived in London since 1942 and is working for the French exiled government. He is partially awakened and an "extraction specialist" – he can transport people by moving them through Metropolis and then back into our reality. However, in the last year he has noticed that it is no longer possible to travel to Berlin this way.

Patel has come to view the entire Illusion as a fascist artefact. He is anti-authoritarian and somewhat condescending to people who are oblivious to the truth. He has gotten into many arguments with both superiors at MI6 and people from the exiled French government. If it was not for his usefulness they would have gotten rid of him already. Patel is familiar with the Weisz sisters from his time in Berlin.

Dark secret: Patel fled Paris in a blind panic in 1942 through a magical labyrinth, hunted by Nazi agents. He left two old friends behind who had escaped Germany alongside him in 1938, Albrecht and Lotte Ehrlich. They were arrested by the Nazis and executed. The Ehrlichs were also students of Leonore Isenburg's and knew the Weisz sisters.

Motivation: Patel knows that the Weisz sisters are hiding in Leonore Isenburg's home. He wants to get the sisters and Isenburg out of Berlin alive. He is tormented by the fact that the arcane legacy of the 1920s has been obliterated by the Nazis and wants to save whatever still remains.

Cover: Francois Schmitt from Aachen. Member of the Nazi party since the late 1920s and corporal in Freikorps Sauerland, an "elite Volksturm" from western Germany.

Attributes

Passive: Fortitude +1, Willpower +2, Reflexes +0

Active: Reason +1, Intuition -2, Perception +0, Coolness +2, Violence +1, Charisma -1, Soul +3

Guilt (Disadvantage)

You carry heavy guilt that you abandoned Albrecht and Lotte Ehrlich. In the first game session and whenever everything appears okay, **roll +0:**

(15+) Your guilt isn't on your mind at the moment.

(10-14) You are reminded of your guilt. The GM takes 1 Hold.

(-9) Your guilt catches up to you. The GM takes 3 Hold.

The GM can spend Hold to make Moves for your guilt. For example, relatives of the people you've hurt seek you out, demons and other creatures are attracted by your guilt, the dead haunt you with nightmares or visions, or you fall victim to anxiety and self-doubt.

Dabbler in the Occult

Whenever you attempt to perform a magical ritual from a set of instructions, **roll +Soul:**

(15+) You perform every step correctly; the ritual works as intended.

(10-14) You make a minor error. The GM chooses one complication:

- You do not have working protection against the forces or entities the ritual summons.
- The effects of the ritual are slightly different than what you had imagined.
- The ritual summons unexpected entities or forces.

(-9) You misunderstand the scripture and perform the ritual with no control whatsoever over the resulting outcome. The GM makes a Move.

Wayfinder

Whenever you travel between two places in the city and allow your madness to guide you through the alleys, **roll +Soul:**

(15+) You discover a shortcut through the alleys, which takes you to your destination within a few minutes, regardless of how far the distance actually is.

(10-14) You discover a shortcut, but there is also some sort of obstacle you will need to get past.

(-9) You discover a shortcut, but it leads you into a dangerous situation, such as the lair of some creature or an ambush set by some gang. The GM makes a Move.

Magical Intuition

You have an innate ability to perceive Kirlian auras and sense the presence of magic. Whenever you utilize your magical intuition, **roll +Soul:**

(15+) Choose up to three options. Up to two may be saved until later this scene.

(10-14) Choose up to two options. One may be saved until later this scene.

(-9) Choose one option, but you also get an unexpected vision or attract attention. The GM makes a Move.

Options:

- Learn something about a creature's true nature.
- Learn if something has a magical nature.
- Learn where the Illusion is weakest towards other dimensions.

Felix Bauer

Age: 49

Background: Born in Berlin. Felix's father died in WWI, so he took over the family's small printworks located in Neukölln, a stronghold for the German communists in the 1920s. Felix managed to hide his communist background from the Nazis and has functioned as a British informant since the 1930s. On paper, he's been a member of the Nazi party since 1934. Felix started working on distribution of office materials and papers after the Berlin printworks were bombed in 1944, which allowed him to move up the ranks within Volkssturm, the militia that organises civilian men. As Kompanieführer he is able to acquire fuel for his car and move freely through the barriers and controls throughout the city. He also spends his time producing forged paperwork for people that require a new identity. Nobody in Berlin, not even Laughton, knows that he is actually a British agent.

Dark secret: When Bauer's earlier associate at the printworks, Ulrich Schüler, and his son Thomas found the radio communicator in Neukölln which exposed Bauer as a British agent, Felix murdered them and buried their corpses in the printworks basement. He's known Schüler since the 1920s and is deeply regretful of his actions.

Motivation: The war must end. Felix is a local patriot that is tormented by watching his city falling apart.

Attributes

Passive: Fortitude +0, Willpower +1, Reflexes +2

Active: Reason +0, Intuition +1, Perception +1, Coolness +3, Violence –1, Charisma +2, Soul –2

Haunted (Disadvantage)

You are haunted by the ghosts after your ex-companion Ulrich Schüler and his son Thomas whom you murdered and buried in the basement of the printworks. They often show up with accusing looks that fill you with guilt and self-loathing. In the first session and whenever you are distracted or weakened, **roll +0** to see if the entity gains power over you:

(15+) The entity leaves you alone.

(10–14) The GM takes 1 Hold.

(–9) The GM takes 3 Hold.

The GM can spend Hold to make a Move for the entity. For example, it requests a service from you and threatens retribution if you refuse, the entity possesses your body for the night, or the entity reveals a clue of what it is and what it wants from you.

Contacts

Whenever you want to acquire items or services, **roll +Charisma:**

(15+) No problem – you get what you're after. Someone will fix you right up.

(10–14) The GM chooses one option:

- It will cost you something extra, such as in-kind services, tasks, or an inflated price.
- You can get it handled, but only by dealing with someone you're already indebted to.
- "Shit, I had one, but I just let it go to [insert name] – maybe you can buy it from her?"
- "Sorry, that's a bit outside of my area, but maybe this will work instead?"

(–9) You think you find what you're looking for, but there will be costly stipulations, considerable flaws, or major complications. The GM makes a Move.

Backstab

Whenever you attack someone who's unprepared for it, roll **+Coolness:**

(15+) Choose two options.

(10–14) Choose one option.

(–9) You expose your betrayal and your target gets to react to your attack as usual. The GM makes a Move.

Options:

Aim for the sensitive parts: Deal +1 Harm.

Knock out: The NPC is rendered unconscious. PCs roll to Endure Injury and become neutralized on a (–9).

Careful: You act soundlessly and, if your victim dies, you leave no clues or traces behind.

Ace up the Sleeve

Whenever someone's got you up against the wall or in a tight spot, **roll +Coolness:**

(15+) Get 2 Edges. You may spend them any time during the scene.

(10–14) Get 1 Edge. You may spend it at any time during the scene.

(–9) Get 1 Edge, but the situation is worse than you imagined. The GM makes a Move.

Edges:

- You have a small, concealed lethal weapon (stiletto or similar), which you can produce unnoticed.
- You realize your opponent has a weakness you can exploit (take +2 to your next roll, if it involves exploiting the weakness). Ask the GM what it is.
- You spot a way out. Ask the GM what it is. Take +2 to your next roll to make use of it.

Cecil Drummond

Age: 38

Background: Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, to a noble family with close ties to the civil services. Grew up in Berlin where his father worked as a diplomat. He studied German and philosophy at the Humbolt University in Berlin in the late 1920s, where he met George Patel. He was recruited by MI6 in 1933 after a short training period at the Office for Foreign Affairs. Despite mostly carrying out administrative desk work, he was elected to lead the operation, mostly due to speaking impeccable German and already being familiar with Patel.

Dark secret: Was manipulated in 1943 by Ethan Fletcher, a British Nazi and covert agent for Germany, into letting classified information slip. Many German agents could've been murdered due to the leak, but Drummond killed Fletcher and never reported his mistake to his superiors. Laughton helped him cover up what had happened in Germany. Now he wants to take Laughton out before he can expose the truth.

Motivation: Agent loyal to the British empire. Drummond would die for his queen and country, but has no problem with letting others die to save himself. Ideally, he'd like to kill Laughton, but will not do so at the risk of the mission.

Cover: Anton Hoffman, one of Felix Bauer's old business partners from Frankfurt. Member of the Nazi party since 1935.

Attributes

Passive: Fortitude +1, Willpower +2, Reflexes +0

Active: Reason +3, Intuition +1, Perception +2, Coolness −2, Violence +0, Charisma +1, Soul −1

Rival (Disadvantage)

Agent Nicholas Laughton knows what you did for Ethan Fletcher and may very well use the information against you. In the first game session and whenever you make a mistake or let down your guard, **roll +0:**

(15+) All clear; your rival makes no moves against you.

(10-14) You've given your rival an opportunity. The GM takes 1 Hold.

(-9) You've handed your rival whatever they needed to completely undermine you. The GM takes 3 Hold.

The GM can spend Hold to make a Move on behalf of your rival. For example, the rival may get an important person on their side, sabotage one of your projects, extort you with evidence damaging to your reputation, or harm or kill a loved one.

Analyst

Whenever you Investigate something, you may also choose from these additional questions:

- Which organizations, groups, or people of interest may be connected to this?
- Is there a connection between this and another event?
- What could a plausible motive be?

Tracer

Whenever you utilize your intelligence networks to trace someone or something, **roll +Reason:**

(15+) Ask up to three of the questions below.

(10-14) Ask up to two of the questions below.

(-9) Ask one of the questions, but someone notices you snooping around. It might be someone you'd rather not be known by, or a traitor inside your network.

Questions:

- Where in the world was this seen last?
- What people have associated themselves with what I'm looking for lately?
- What tracks and marks has it left behind?
- Who else is trying to find what I'm looking for?

Instinct

Whenever you Observe a Situation and act on the GM's answers, take +2 instead of +1.

Richard Farley

Age: 29

Background: Born in Manchester to an English father and Italian mother, both of whom were working class. An SAS sergeant and a veteran from North Africa and Italy. Has a significant amount of experience fighting behind enemy lines, and quite the ear for languages. Farley is a native English and Italian speaker, as well as German and Greek with a bit of an accent. He is a hardened anti-fascist who faught as a volunteer in Spain in 1936 and would be happy to see the USSR take over Europe.

Dark secret: Farley executed prisoners that became a burden and extorted civilians to assist with all sorts of things in North Africa and Greece. His actions have caught up with him and tormented him since he returned home.

Motivation: Overthrow the fascists, at all costs. Farley has lost many of his friends and allies since 1936. He is vengeful and wants the Nazis to pay for what they have done with blood. He is worried about being exposed as a communist by Drummond and keeps a low profile around him.

Cover: Bruni Scarci, an Italian fascist on the run from the allied forces.

Attributes

Passive: Fortitude +2, Willpower +0, Reflexes +1

Active: Reason +0, Intuition –1, Perception +1, Coolness +2, Violence +3, Charisma –2, Soul +1

Nightmares (Disadvantage)

You suffer from recurring nightmares, where you relive the horrors of war and the atrocities you've committed. During any scene when you sleep, **roll +0:**

(15+) You sleep in peace.

(10–14) The nightmares torment you. The GM may make a Move for your nightmares. For example, you are unable to sleep at all during the night (–1 ongoing until you sleep), something follows you back into reality, the nightmares provide you insight into the Truth, or you are forced to process some trauma (Keep it Together) when you wake up.

(–9) The nightmares take over completely. You are trapped in the dream until you find a way to wake up, and everything that happens there also directly affects your sleeping body.

Officer

Whenever you are in combat with at least one ally by your side, **roll +Violence:**

(15+) Get 3 Edges. You may spend them any time during the scene.

(10–14) Get 2 Edges. You may spend them any time during the scene.

(–9) You misjudge the situation. Choose whether you have put yourself or one of your allies in harm's way. The GM makes a Move for your opponent.

Edges:

- **Attack!:** One ally gets +2 to their next roll to Engage in Combat.
- **Coordinate fire!:** All allies get +1 to their next roll to Engage in Combat with firearms while in the fight.
- **Aim for the head!:** You or one of your allies' Engage in Combat deals +1 Harm.
- **Take cover!:** You or an ally receive 2 Armor against a ranged attack.

Hardened

You take +1 ongoing to Endure Injury.

Dead Shot

You are a seasoned marksman. Any Harm you deal with a firearm is considered +1 Harm.

Charlotte Weisz

Age: 32

Background: Born in Dresden. Daughter to Max Weisz, a colleague of Professor Isenburg's who believed for far too long that he would be saved and spared due to his wife Hanne belonging to an old Prussian family. The entire Weisz family, save for Charlotte and her sister Erna, were murdered in 1943. The sisters hid with Mrs. Isenburg and planned to escape alongside her through Metropolis, but they did not manage to escape before all routes out of Berlin were closed off due to Berlin becoming too closely connected to Inferno. Charlotte was training to become a nurse, but didn't finish before the Nazis shut down all education for Jewish women. Charlotte is familiar with George Patel. He tried, and failed, to convince her and her sister to leave Germany in 1937.

Dark secret: In 1943, the sisters hid at the home of Eugen Richter, a mage from Dresden and an old friend of both Isenburg and Patel. Richter demanded sexual favours in return for not handing the sisters over to the Gestapo. The sisters had enough and murdered him. When they managed to get in touch with Isenburg they claimed that it was the Nazis that had killed him. They have no intentions of ever revealing what actually happened.

Motivation: Escape from Germany. Ideally find a way to avenge their family's death. But first, they must find the Isenburgs.

Cover: Natalie Schlossmann from Königsberg. Nurse and a member of the Nazi party since 1937. Fled to Berlin to escape the red army's advances in January.

Attributes

Passive: Fortitude +1, Willpower +0, Reflexes +2

Active: Reason +2, Intuition +3, Perception -1, Coolness -2, Violence +0, Charisma +1, Soul +1

Harassed

You are hunted by the Nazis because of your jewish ethnicity. In the first game session and whenever you draw attention to yourself, **roll +0** to see if you're harassed:

(15+) You've managed to keep clear of harassment.

(10-14) The GM takes 1 Hold.

(-9) The GM takes 3 Hold.

The GM can spend Hold to make Moves for the harassers. For example, someone destroys your property or possessions, you are bullied and attacked by people with a prejudice against you, the authorities forcefully take something from you (rights, property, assets), someone you care about is harmed for associating with you, or you are denied your basic rights due to your identity.

Battlefield Medicine

Whenever you stabilize an injured person's wounds, even if you don't have access to medical equipment, **roll +Reason:**

(15+) Choose two options.

(10-14) You may choose one option. However, you must also choose one complication:

- You leave cosmetic scars or defects (the patient loses Stability (-2).
- There are lingering side effects (-1 to all rolls the wound could feasibly affect until it's fully healed).
- The patient remains knocked out until the GM determines that they awaken.

(-9) You stabilize the wound, even without access to medical equipment, but there are also unexpected and potentially dangerous consequences, such as infections, healing deformities, or other serious side effects. The GM makes a Move.

Options:

- **Improvisation:** You stabilize one Wound without access to medical equipment.
- **Effective:** You stabilize two Wounds instead of one.
- **Careful:** The wound stabilizes and will heal much faster than normal.

Vigilant

Whenever you Read a Person, you may choose from these questions in addition to the usual ones:

- Are you hiding anything from me?
- How do you really feel about me?

Intuitive

You can sense people's motives through subconscious readings of their body language, word choices, and behavior. Whenever you Read a Person, you may always ask one additional question, regardless of the outcome of your roll.

Erna Weisz

Age: 26

Background: Born in Dresden. Charlotte's sister. Has a gift for the occult arts. Has plowed through Mrs. Isenburg's occult library in the last year while hiding in her basement, and has the best theoretical understanding of the Illusion and the truth of all characters. Is eager to learn more from Patel, as she is already acquainted with him and is aware he used to study under Mrs. Isenburg.

Dark secret: In 1943, the sisters hid at the home of Eugen Richter, a mage from Dresden and an old friend of both Isenburg and Patel. Richter demanded sexual favours in return for not handing the sisters over to the Gestapo. The sisters had enough and murdered him. When they managed to get in touch with Isenburg they claimed that it was the Nazis that killed him. They have no intentions of ever revealing what actually happened.

Motivation: Escape Germany and learn more about magic. But first, she must find and save Leonore Isenburg.

Cover: Hanne Schlossman from Königsberg. Natalie's cousin. Red Cross officer.

Attributes

Passive: Fortitude +0, Willpower +2, Reflexes +1

Active: Reason +1, Intuition +2, Perception -2, Coolness +0, Violence -1, Charisma +1, Soul +3

Opium Addict (Disadvantage)

During your captivity in the clutches of Eugene Richter you became addicted to opium. In the first game session and whenever you use the drug, or have the opportunity to use, roll +0:

(15+) You are in control of the urge, for now.

(10-14) The GM takes 1 Hold.

(-9) The GM takes 3 Hold.

The GM may spend Hold to make a Move for your addiction. For example, you cannot resist using the drug, run out of drugs, become indebted to a dangerous person, put yourself in danger while under the influence of drugs, or ruin something important to you - like a relationship - while under the influence.

Effect: When you are high on opium you have +1 on all Rolls involving Soul. You have -1 on all other Attribute rolls except for Fortitude and Willpower.

Enhanced Awareness

When you focus your senses at a location where the Illusion is weak, **roll +Soul.** On a success, you have visions about the place and may be able to speak to entities tied to it:

(15+) You can discern clear details regarding the location.

(10-14) You get some basic impressions regarding the location.

(-9) The Illusion tears. The veil is lifted temporarily, revealing an alternate dimension - the GM determines which one. The PC could be sucked into it or something may cross over into our reality. The GM makes a Move.

Occult Studies

You are a student of the occult. Upon coming in contact with a magical discipline, entity, or phenomenon for the first time, **roll +Reason:**

(15+) Take both options below.

(10-14) Choose one option.

(-9) You have a hazy memory of something like this, but can't say for sure if it's true or not. The GM explains what it is you remember.

Options:

- I know something about this (ask the GM what you know and take +1 ongoing while acting on the answers during this scene).
- I know where I can find more information about this (ask the GM where).

Magical Intuition

You have an innate ability to perceive Kirlian auras and sense the presence of magic. Whenever you utilize your magical intuition, **roll +Soul:**

(15+) Choose up to three options. Up to two may be saved until later this scene.

(10-14) Choose up to two options. One may be saved until later this scene.

(-9) Choose one option, but you also get an unexpected vision or attract attention. The GM makes a Move.

Options:

- Learn something about a creature's true nature.
- Learn if something has a magical nature.
- Learn where the Illusion is weakest towards other dimensions.

JUDGMENT

A YOUNG WOMAN JUST UNDERWENT AN ABORTION PROcedure at an illegal clinic. The world is changing far too fast for her and her loved ones.

Five pre-generated characters are provided, allowing players to portray the young woman, her lover, and her family.

DESCRIPTION

Judgment is a scenario about the collision of agendas. A young protégé Death Magician seeks to avenge the death of his mentor by using a family close to the suspected murderer. Unbeknownst to him, the murderer is a lictor that has its claws deep inside the family.

The scenario is set in Phoenix, Arizona, in the near future. The political arena is dominated by the accelerating power of the far-right. Activist groups on all sides of the political spectrum are desperately competing for recruits. Political rallies, mostly in favor of the fascist right, are common and growing in size. The number of criminals receiving the death penalty increases exponentially. Mass shootings are becoming more and more frequent.

Global warming intensifies with temperatures rising year-on-year. The city is gripped by a dangerous heatwave. Even as the death toll rises, the government continues to deny that climate change is responsible.

Abortion has become illegal throughout much of the country. Arizona is one of the few States where it is still legal. Demonstrations and protests by both sides of the issue are regular sights on the streets, even in the blistering heat, as pressure mounts for the state to fall in line with the majority of the country.

Scenario Theme

The central theme of the scenario is that there are no "good" options or choices. You're damned if you do, and damned if you don't. All of the player characters wind up in an unpleasant situation due to the collective choices they've made. In some cases, they don't believe they've had any "choice" at all.

The scenes presented in the body of the scenario echo this central theme. Turning to friends for help or guidance could ultimately leave the player characters in a worse position than where they started (e.g. going to Richard, trying to secure Eve's help, etc.). Ultimately, by trying to solve their problems, the player characters will come to realize the truth of the Illusion and their lives will never be the same.

The GM should emphasize this theme by leaning into every time a character achieves a *success with a complication*; the player characters should be presented with difficult or unpleasant choices.

In addition, the scenario also engages with secondary themes regarding life and death, and what life is worth. The player characters' perspectives regarding certain concepts may change as the true nature of the world becomes apparent, leaving them casting about for new morals and meanings.

BACKGROUND

This section outlines the events leading up to the start of play.

Wayne Mynatt and Eve Walker

Wayne Mynatt and Eve Walker both wanted to live forever. They met studying medicine in Phoenix, Arizona, soon became on-and-off lovers, and discovered Death Magic together. Through their experiments, they pierced the Illusion and explored the City of the Dead.

They discovered that they could steal the life essence of unborn children to prolong their own lives. Under the guise of an illegal abortion clinic, they drained unwanted fetuses of their life essence. They charged minimal fees and asked no questions. As far as the mothers knew, they were anesthetized and underwent a painless abortion procedure. It was perfect – until Hazel Lane was one of their clients two years ago.

Hazel's pregnancy was an accident. Her boyfriend was not ready to be a father and pressured Hazel into an abortion. Wayne and Eve drained the fetus and sent Hazel on her way.

Pastor Richard Ward

Hazel attended the Church of Heavenly Unity, a megachurch in Phoenix run by the charismatic televangelist, Pastor Richard Ward, a lictor of Binah. His sermons promote the strength of the family and he regularly leads his congregation in anti-abortion protests. Guilt-ridden, Hazel sought the Pastor's advice and forgiveness.

When he discovered what really happened to Hazel and her unwanted pregnancy, Richard was furious. He ordered some of his most trusted and fanatical followers (including James Hammond and Martin Cain) to track down those responsible. They found Wayne and followed him to his apartment. Here they found pictures of him and Eve, and deduced she was also a magician. Under torture, Wayne did not reveal Eve's name or whereabouts. Richard's followers killed Wayne and set his apartment ablaze to make it look like he had died in the fire.

Distraught by the death of her lover, Eve made contact with Wayne's soul beyond the Illusion. She learned what had happened to him, but like him, had no idea who his attackers were or who they worked for. All she knew for sure was that they would soon be after her.

Eve went into hiding and harvested souls to mask her own from detection. Richard suspects Eve is still in the city and has not fled. He has given his closest followers copies of her photo from Wayne's apartment and they have been looking for her ever since.

Eve's "spiritual armor" is not a permanent solution. It needs regular renewal, much like the efforts to prolong her life, so Eve needs to keep harvesting souls from unborn children. Now on her own, Eve occasionally makes some mistakes when removing the lifeless fetuses from her clients. The handful of women that required emergency medical attention as a result have alerted the police to the presence of Eve's operation in the city. The authorities are now actively looking for her too.

Tyler Egerton

Wayne left behind an apprentice, Tyler Egerton, a medical student he had taken under his wing. Wayne had been Tyler's first true friend. Tyler wants vengeance, believing correctly that Wayne had been murdered. He knows nothing of Eve's fate, assuming that because she was missing, she was most likely also dead.

Conducting his own investigation, Tyler learned that members of the Church of Heavenly Unity fled the scene as the fire bloomed in the apartment. Tyler guessed they were acting on the Pastor's orders, but he knew nothing of Richard's true nature.

Wanting to know what happened, and after months trying to learn the necessary ritual by himself, Tyler also tried to contact Wayne. He learned the hard way that he was not skilled enough to perform the rite successfully. The remains of Wayne's soul latched on to Tyler, haunting him and urging him to bring down Richard, believing Tyler's suspicions to be true. Because of his failure with the rite, he has not dared to try and summon Eve's soul, which would have confirmed to him whether she was alive or dead.

Tyler knew he needed a way to get inside the church and learn the truth. The Caldwell family would be his way in.

The Caldwells

The Caldwells are a family that has come to the attention of the lictor, Pastor Richard Ward. George Caldwell, an artist, and his wife, Jessica, a police detective, have two children, Angelica and Genesis, both university students.

18 months ago, Genesis was attacked by two masked men after a party. The men were acting on Richard's orders so that he could intervene and "rescue" Genesis. Sending church members to "attack" individuals and other members to "rescue" them is typical of the Church of Heavenly Unity. The act of saving the marks gives Richard, a consummate tactician and con man, the chance to build a connection with them and convince them (and by extension, their families) into joining the church. Genesis has indeed developed a strong connection with Richard and since become heavily involved with the church.

George and Jessica are receptive to Genesis's promotion of the church and regularly attend services.

George is a talented artist, but success has evaded him. In recent years, he's fallen into a spiral of depression. To increase his hold over the family, and to draw more of them deeper into the church, Richard has recently commissioned George to produce a mural for the church, with the promise of more work to come once it is completed. George is very grateful for this and passionately supports the church.

Both George and Genesis have become friends with Mike, one of the housekeepers at the megachurch complex. Unbeknownst to them, Mike is an angel (Seraphim), bound in service to Richard after having been stolen from his previous master, a creature in service to Geburah. The lictor routinely beats and abuses Mike in order to maintain his hold over the angel, ensuring that Mike's spirit remains broken and extinguishing any hope of release.

Jessica, who is part of the police investigation trying to locate Eve, approves of Richard's pro-life and family values, and greatly appreciates the help and encouragement he has given Genesis over the last 18 months. However, the experiences Jessica has had in the line of duty have left her questioning her own faith. She is yet to commit to the church to the same degree that Genesis and George have.

Angelica, rebelling against Genesis wearing her faith on her sleeve, has instead turned to the occult. There, she met Tyler. Tyler has shown Angelica glimpses of the City of the Dead, although she does not realize Tyler is using her for his own ends.

Tyler's Plan

Being haunted by Wayne's fractured and tormented soul was taking its toll on Tyler. Wayne was becoming impatient for revenge and threatened to possess Tyler and take action if he did not make progress soon. Terrified that he might become trapped as little more than a passenger in his own body, Tyler redoubled his efforts. He also began to plan ways by which he might eventually detach Wayne's soul from him forever.

Tyler's investigation of the Church of Heavenly Unity led to him discovering the Caldwells. Tyler believed he could use them to get closer to Richard and gain access to the church. He attempted to seduce Genesis, so that he could be brought into the church as her boyfriend (a more substantial cover story than just a friend being invited to the congregation). His seduction failed, but luckily for him, Angelica developed an interest in him instead. He started dating Angelica.

As their relationship became more intimate, Tyler realized that Angelica could solve his problem with Wayne. If he could sleep with her, Tyler could create a new vessel into which he could transfer Wayne's soul at the moment of conception. One night, two months ago, Tyler convinced Angelica to try a drug he offered her. In her drugged state, Angelica made love to Tyler in the City of the Dead and the ritual was successful. Tyler impregnated Angelica and Wayne's soul passed into the unborn child.

The Abortion

Once Angelica realized she was pregnant, she panicked. She sought help from her closest friend, Emma Creed, who directed her towards Eve's abortion clinic. Angelica eventually decided this was her only way out of the situation and went with Emma to undergo the procedure.

Emma heard strange sounds during the abortion, and ran to interrupt Eve's ritual. This ritual would have harvested the soul of (unbeknownst to Eve) Wayne, which she would have used to replenish her spiritual armor. This interruption left fragments of Wayne's already fractured soul inside Angelica. These fragments will soon be ejected and rewrite the Illusion around her for a short time, effectively replaying the memories for Angelica (and those closest to her) to see. The rest of Wayne's tortured and enraged soul fled back to Tyler, attaching itself to him once more.

Emma got Angelica out of the clinic, and Angelica has tried to forget the memory of everything she saw that night.

Upon returning home, Angelica was confronted by Jessica, who believed her daughter was on drugs. In the argument that followed, Angelica revealed that she had been to an abortion clinic. A family meeting has been called and Tyler has been ordered to come to the house.

This is where the scenario begins.

Timeline of Events

3 years ago: Tyler meets Wayne and becomes his protégé.

2 years ago: Wayne and Eve terminate the unborn child of one of Richard's congregation. Richard orders an attack on those responsible. Wayne is killed. Eve goes into hiding, stealing souls to mask her own from detection.

18 months ago: Genesis is "attacked" and "rescued" by Richard. In the following weeks and months, she joins the Church of Heavenly Unity and encourages her family to attend with her.

12 months ago: Tyler's attempt to summon Wayne goes wrong and he is haunted by his former mentor from this point onward.

10 months ago: Tyler's investigation of the Church of Heavenly Unity leads him to the Caldwells and he plans to use them as a way to gain deeper access to the church. He attempts to seduce Genesis and fails.

8 months ago: Angelica makes a move on Tyler and the two become involved.

2 months ago: Believing he can use Angelica to make a new vessel for Wayne, Tyler drugs Angelica and performs a ritual while he impregnates her in the City of the Dead. Wayne's soul passes into their unborn child.

Now: Angelica just had the abortion.

THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

Five player characters are presented. While the scenario works best when all five are played, options are presented below for combinations that can be used when fewer players are available.

Angelica Caldwell: the young art student that has recently had the abortion.

Tyler Egerton: Angelica's lover, a protégé Death Magician.

Jessica Caldwell: Angelica's mother, a detective in the Phoenix police.

George Caldwell: Angelica's father, an artist currently working for the church.

Genesis Caldwell: Angelica's sister, a devoted member of the church.

In each of the below combinations, Angelica is always available as a player character, as she is at the center of the narrative in the opening scene and throughout the rest of the scenario.

The characters that are not played should take lesser roles in the scenario, under the GM's control. The players can certainly interact with the other characters, but it should be the player characters at the center of attention.

For Two Players

When running the scenario for two players, Angelica can be paired with any of the other characters.

Paring Angelica with Tyler can be quite a tense combination, especially if/when Angelica learns what Tyler has truly done to her. Can they resolve this issue and work together to uncover the truth and pull the family free of the lictor's influence?

Likewise, pairing Angelica with Genesis may be similarly tense when the truth about Richard comes to light and Genesis is confronted with the fact that she was manipulated all along.

Both parents have similar issues that may pull them in different directions to Angelica. George has become heavily reliant upon the church after Richard has commissioned his art. Will he believe his daughter and be willing to risk his career? Jessica has been looking for the person behind the illegal abortion clinic for months. What will she do when she finds Eve, especially when the Death Magician presents them with a chance to deal with the lictor?

For Three Players

There are three recommended combinations for three players.

Selecting Angelica, Genesis and Tyler results in a group of characters all roughly the same age. There is no dominating adult presence in the group, placing them on an equal level. There is still opportunity for tension and conflict in the group when truths come to light (Tyler's motivations, how Genesis has been manipulated, etc.).

Selecting Angelica, Jessica and George keeps everyone in the family unit. Angelica can strive to convince her parents that Richard is evil, which can result in some tense roleplay with George having become so attached to the church and Jessica still trying to resolve issues with her own faith.

Selecting Angelica, Jessica and Genesis results in a group sharing elements of the previous two. Angelica can try to convince her mother of the truth while also struggling against the passionate faith of her sister.

For Four Players

In this instance, the GM can make the choice based on which character they would like to control and what they can do with it in the scenario (remembering that the player characters are supposed to be center-stage).

Having Tyler as a non-player character allows the GM more control over when he can reveal his motivations. This can lead to some intense scenes if framed at the right time.

Having George or Genesis as non-player characters fills similar roles. As they are both heavily invested in the church, the GM can play up their objections to the player characters if/when they start to question Richard or act against him.

Having Jessica as a non-player character can provide the chance to play up conflicts with the player characters especially if/when they meet Eve. After all, she is a police officer who has been trying to find Eve for some time now.

Backgrounds and Character Sheets

The backgrounds for each player character present how events have unfolded prior to the start of play from their perspective. Most characters have information that only they know and have not shared with the others. The GM should encourage the players not to reveal anything from their backgrounds before commencing play, otherwise they could inadvertently spoil a big reveal.

Each player character has just one Advantage and one Disadvantage.

At the groups choosing, this scenario could end with these characters going on to subsequent adventures (which also happened during playtesting). In that case, it is recommended that following this scenario, the player characters advance

to Aware archetypes and can rearrange their stats should they wish.

Suggested archetypes for each character include:

Angelica Caldwell: The Artist, The Occultist, The Seeker

Tyler Egerton: The Death Magician, The Occultist, The Seeker

Jessica Caldwell: The Agent, The Avenger, The Detective

George Caldwell: The Artist, The Broken, The Careerist

Genesis Caldwell: The Artist, The Disciple, The Prophet

Alternately, if the GM would prefer to run the scenario with the player characters as fully Aware archetypes, they can include the Dark Secret and Disadvantage listed in their descriptions and then let the players complete the rest of the character sheet as they desire. In this instance, the GM may wish to consider the impact that certain Advantages may have upon the scenario. Advantages that make it easier for the player characters to see through the Illusion (e.g. ***Enhanced Awareness***) may reveal the true natures of certain characters a lot sooner in play than otherwise presented.

Other Details

Some details are left vague in the character backgrounds. These allow the players to customize the group dynamic a little more. Some questions the gamemaster should pose to the players are:

- Who is the older sister out of Angelica and Genesis, or are they twins? None of the character backgrounds specify their age, although it can be assumed that Angelica, Tyler and Genesis are in their early-to-mid 20s given they are students.
- Were the family particularly religious before getting involved with the church? Since they have attended church services a few times, have they become true believers, or are they just making Genesis happy by their attendance?

If any other points are highlighted by players that do not tie in directly with the scenario background, the gamemaster is encouraged to let the players elaborate upon them and flesh them out.

Plot Device vs. Disadvantage

The player characters are all affected when Wayne's memories rewrite reality around them. While it could be considered a Disadvantage, highlighting it on the character sheet from the outset could weaken the impact of such moments. As such, it is considered a plot device for the purpose of this scenario.

THE NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Pastor Richard Ward, Lictor of Binah

Richard appears to be a charismatic man in his late early 50s, with silvering hair, often dressed in a black linen suit. In his true form, Richard is nearly eight feet tall. His flesh is mostly milky white, apart from patches around his joints which are translucent. His fingers end in sharp claws, and his large head is dominated by a giant mouth lined with teeth resembling razor blades.

Richard preys upon the weak and the vulnerable, just as he did with Genesis, to bring them into the congregation and therefore under his influence. These people are more pliable and are easily integrated into the church community or “family”. In his role, he is their undisputed father-figure. He seeks to grow the congregation of the megachurch as much as is physically possible, both by hosting physical services and streaming his sermons around the world.

Once he knows about what has happened to Angelica, he will want the family to bring him the person responsible for the abortion (i.e. Eve). Then, he can finally destroy her. Likewise, if he learns about Tyler and his actions, he will seek to destroy this new threat as well.

There is the danger that, if the Caldwells learn too much about the truth in the process, they will have to be disposed of to tie up all loose ends. This would be unfortunate, given the time he has invested in Genesis and George, but necessary to protect the rest of the church from the truth.

Mike, Enslaved Angel

Genesis and George know Mike as a friendly yet lonely housekeeper working for the church. Mike is an angel, bound to Richard’s service after having been stolen from his former master. He is tasked with keeping the church clean and other such menial tasks.

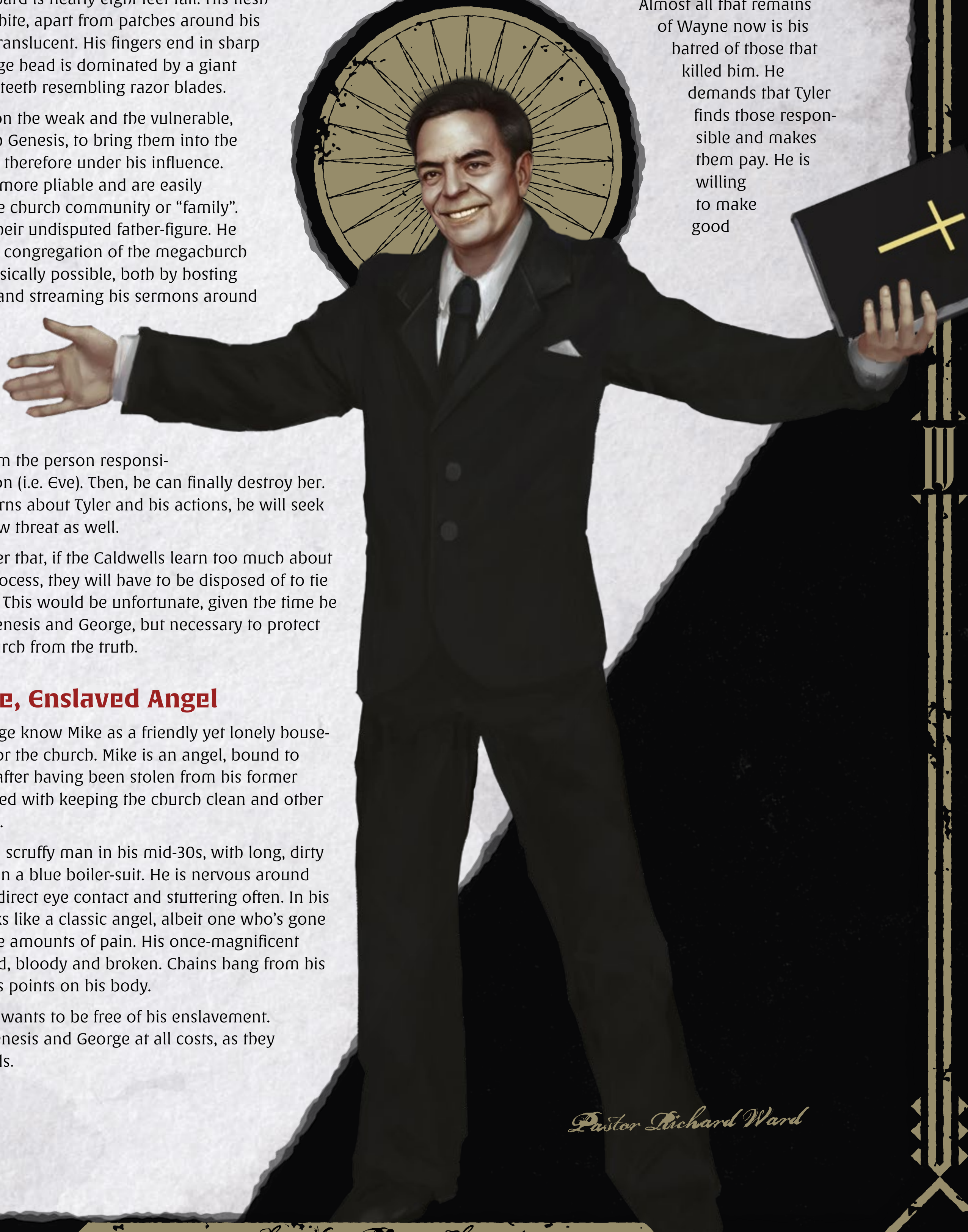
Mike appears as a scruffy man in his mid-30s, with long, dirty hair and dressed in a blue boiler-suit. He is nervous around people, avoiding direct eye contact and stuttering often. In his true form, he looks like a classic angel, albeit one who’s gone through incredible amounts of pain. His once-magnificent wings are battered, bloody and broken. Chains hang from his wings and various points on his body.

Above all else, he wants to be free of his enslavement. He will protect Genesis and George at all costs, as they are his only friends.

Wayne Mynatt, Deceased Death Magician

What is left of Wayne’s soul is now attached to Tyler. He remains invisible and insubstantial for the majority of the time. He becomes visible to other PCs when the Illusion is thin, whereupon he appears as a heavily-burnt corpse, leaving a trail of ash and blood where he passes.

Almost all that remains of Wayne now is his hatred of those that killed him. He demands that Tyler finds those responsible and makes them pay. He is willing to make good



Pastor Richard Ward

on his promise and tell Tyler the location of his notebooks containing his knowledge of Death Magic should he be successful. These are stored in a locker at a self-storage facility in the downtown area.

Emma Creed, Angelica's Best Friend

Emma is Angelica's closest friend. They both enrolled at the university to study art at the same time and have been friends ever since. She is a romantic goth, invariably found all in black, with a long leather coat (even in the heat wave, though she always carries a full water bottle).

Emma has an interest in the occult, which is how she came to meet Tyler and eventually introduced Angelica to him. She has an almost encyclopedic knowledge of all the best bars and nightclubs in the city. She spends almost every evening out on the town, which is how she came to know about the illegal clinic, through gossip and overheard conversations.

She has been shaken up by the ritual she witnessed at the clinic. She believes she has finally seen real magic performed, in all its terrible glory. She is scared of what this means, and wonders if she and Angelica are safe now.

Eve Walker, Abortionist Death Magician

Eve is a slender, pale woman in her late-30s, normally wearing a black trouser suit. She has been living out of a van, allowing her to keep on the move. The van also contains all her medical equipment and supplies. She has a long list of abandoned buildings in the city that she uses to set up her pop-up clinic, then move on afterwards.

It is Eve's stubbornness that has kept her in Phoenix. She won't be pushed out by anyone, no matter what they try to do to her. She also believes she has eternity on her side. She will live forever – her enemies won't (or so she thinks). All she has to do is wait and her enemies will die.

Eve tried to conduct her own investigation into Wayne's murder, but keeping a low profile has hindered her progress significantly. She wants vengeance, but doesn't know what she is up against.

Thomas Davis, Genesis's Ex-Boyfriend

Thomas is Genesis's ex-boyfriend. He is the same age as Genesis, studying journalism at the university. He doesn't socialize much, keeping to himself in his spare time, and is a young man of few words. He's of average height and build, with short hair, glasses and always dresses business casual.

He still loves Genesis deeply, but is too full of guilt following the attack for him to try to get back together with her. He will help her and the Caldwells any way he can, if they approach him, but ideally from a distance (e.g. conducting research, watching locations, etc.).

Gary and Charlotte Egerton, Tyler's Parents

Tyler's parents are intended to be a very insignificant part of the scenario, reflecting how they treat their son and the involvement they have in his life. They should always be at work and difficult to contact throughout the events of the scenario. This gives Tyler access to an empty house should he need it, and potentially medical supplies if the GM desires any to be kept there. They might also be available to treat any characters who have to go to the hospital.

James Hammond and Martin Cain

James and Martin were recruited into the church years ago, having come from poor families that were given hope by the lictor. They are fanatically loyal to Richard and carry out his orders without question. They would die for him.

Studying politics at the university (their courses funded by the church, hoping that they might become useful assets to infiltrate this sector of society in the future), they identify fellow students that could be recruited into the church by various means. It was they who identified Genesis as a target for recruitment. Richard approved of their selection and ordered them to attack Genesis so that he could "save" her and bring her into the fold.

Both of them live on the church property when they are not at the university, serving as members of Richard's personal guard while he is in the megachurch complex. Genesis has seen and spoken to them both a handful of times during her visits to the church, but she has not yet realized that they are the two men who attacked her. When Genesis hears them repeat the lines they said to her during the attack, she will finally make the connection.

James and Martin are both in their mid-20s with blonde hair and blue eyes. They are very muscular for their age. They are dressed in smart black security guard uniforms and armed with batons and small-caliber revolvers.

KEY LOCATIONS

North Mountain Village and The Caldwell House

The North Mountain Village, Phoenix, Arizona is a mainly residential development, north from downtown. Black Canyon Freeway (Interstate 17) runs through the district, from north to south. The North Mountain and its surrounding Park looks over the area from the east. The Arizona State University West Campus occupies much of the north-western corner of the district.

Affluent apartment complexes cover much of the area. Off the main grid roads, residential streets meander towards the next main road, intersected by other curving streets forming small housing blocks. Most houses are two-stories tall and many have pools.

The Caldwell house is in one such block of 14 houses (two rows of seven) between Lakeview Elementary School to the north and West Peoria Avenue to the south. It is a two-story building with cream walls and a terracotta colored roof. An oval pool dominates the backyard, surrounded by paving and a patio.

The family has a car (mainly used by Jessica) and a minivan (providing them all with ample space) parked out on the driveway. The double garage has been turned into an art studio by George.

The first floor is mostly open plan with the hallway, kitchen, lounge and dining room all connected. The second floor boasts the master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, two smaller bedrooms for Angelica and Genesis, and a larger bathroom. The interior of the house is usually kept cool by an air conditioning system, but it has started to sputter recently and has yet to be repaired.

Abandoned Downtown Office Building

This four-story building was previously used by a web design company that closed down a few months ago. It's been abandoned ever since. Large "to let" signs are visible from the front. Without the air conditioning running, the interior of the building is like an oven during the day. At night, it's just barely tolerable.

Office furniture can still be found throughout the building. Angelica entered through a fire escape at the end of a narrow alleyway running alongside the building. This opens into what was an empty storeroom that Eve furnished with couches from one of the offices upstairs. Eve met Angelica here and this is where Emma waited during the procedure. An adjoining empty room is where Eve performed her interrupted ritual.

There is little left here to indicate that anything took place. The furniture Eve moved is where she left it. There are remnants of the chalk circle and candle wax that Eve used to form her magical circle around where the operating table stood. Gurney tracks on the dusty floor lead from the operating room down a corridor to a loading bay at the back of the building where deliveries were previously made. Tire tracks outside can identify that a van was used to bring equipment to and from the building.

The Church of Heavenly Unity

The Church of Heavenly Unity is a megachurch, a huge complex on the northern slopes of the North Mountain. At the heart of the complex is the main auditorium which is comparable in size to a football stadium. There are enough parking spaces for over 1, 000 cars.

The octagonal auditorium building is surrounded on five of its eight sides by meeting halls (flanking the courtyard leading to the auditorium's main entrance) and residential blocks (behind the auditorium) where the church staff and security live (including Richard, Mike, James and Martin).

The main entrance is a row of glass doors manned by security personnel in black uniforms that usher worshipers through metal detectors before passing through into the lobby. The lobby is impressively constructed from marble, demonstrating the astronomical wealth of the church. Sweeping staircases rise to the left and right, allowing access to the upper levels of the auditorium while a three-story-high marble statue of Christ stands with its arms open wide over the first-floor doors into the auditorium.

The auditorium is much larger than it initially appears from the outside. Worshipers are guided by church staff to available seats in an orderly fashion to ensure the best use of space. In the center of the auditorium is the raised circular stage. Comfortable sofas are positioned in an arc, facing a row of television cameras in a pit in front of the stage. Huge screens suspended from the ceiling above the stage allow the further reaches of the audience, and those behind the stage, to see what is going on during a sermon. Wrapped around half the stage is a back wall, upon which George's depiction of Heaven is painted. Behind the wall, stairs lead down to the basement and tunnels connecting the auditorium with the other buildings in the complex.

The gates of Heaven in the painting depict the seven intricate locks of the Blind Gates to the citadel of the Demiurge. George is completely unaware of the meaning behind the image, having painted it to the specifications outlined by the Pastor. Richard can use the mural as a gateway to the citadel of Binah, where he can go to be healed if he is injured (see below).

Richard's office is directly above the lobby with a wall-length window overlooking the courtyard. The walls are lined with antiquarian religious texts and sculptures depicting the apostles. There is a large desk, with five chairs in an arc arranged before it.

Binah's Citadel

The gateway to the citadel appears as a mural on the wall. Those that know of its function and have the appropriate magical skill and talent can push open the gates in the painting, the wall parting like a set of curtains, which lead into a chamber deep within the citadel. From the other side of the gateway, the wall appears to be a painted mural of the auditorium of the megachurch.

The chamber is the size of a large church, with the ceiling shrouded high in the darkness above. Iron chandeliers glow in the darkness hanging on sturdy chains, adorned with dozens of candles that provide the chamber with some light. Windows along one wall look out towards the other spires of the citadel, and the red-mist-shrouded crypts and tombs of the graveyard below.

Dozens of Binah's servants, dressed in tattered robes, kneel in prayer before a raised platform at the far end of the chamber. A ten-foot-wide vat of black liquid sits in the center of the platform, in which Richard is fully submerged when he is being healed. The back wall behind the platform is dominated by an enormous statue of the Black Madonna, carved from black stone, which rises into the darkness so that only the feet and lower legs are visible.

Doors and staircases lead from the wall opposite the windows, heading deeper into the citadel. What the player characters might find there, only the gamemaster knows.

TIPS FOR THE GAMEMASTER

The Supernatural

The gamemaster should be very careful with how and when they present Richard and Mike to the player characters. If the player characters are on edge and have any indication that either of them is something other than human, this could quickly escalate to physical conflict (especially with Richard).

If an encounter does turn into a premature combat, and if the player characters are armed (e.g. Jessica as a police officer, or Genesis with her handgun), the lictor can use his magic to manipulate the Illusion and destroy the weapons, making them think twice about continuing to attack.

Heat and Tension

The scenario takes place during an intense heat wave. Going outside is uncomfortable and people are likely to have much shorter tempers than normal. It won't take much to push someone over the edge into full-blown anger. Remember this if the player characters start antagonizing anyone.

Structure

Judgment is a scenario without a fixed timeline that the GM must run in a set order. The opening scene is designed to allow the players an opportunity for some intense roleplay before introducing a moment of strangeness and horror (as the memory of Wayne's birth rewrites a portion of the Illusion in their house). After this, the player characters can follow any path they wish.

The core of the scenario involves the player characters interacting with the non-player characters detailed in their backgrounds, as well as visiting the locations outlined in "Key Locations" (above). In addition to these core scenes, there are also suggestions on how the Disadvantages and Dark Secrets of each player character might impact certain scenes, and suggestions for when more of Wayne's memories might manifest around Angelica (ideally when other player characters are present too) during play.

As there are quite a few possibilities available to the player characters after the introductory scene, this can be a bit daunting to some players. If the players are struggling to identify a way forward at any point, the GM can pose them some questions.

Angelica: You're pretty sure you remember where the clinic was in the downtown area. Maybe you might find something there? Also, you remember being sedated, and then you were with Emma on the way home. Maybe she might know something you don't?

Tyler: Wayne might be able to explain some of what is happening, or the answers could be detailed in his notebooks. Could this be your chance to convince him to reveal their location to you?

Jessica: It's a terrible thought, but what if the abortionist Angelica went to see was the same one you've been trying to find for the last couple of years? You've got the sketches from her victims, maybe Angelica might recognize her?

George and Genesis: The next church service is in the morning. The Pastor will be there. He's a good man. He will know what to do and how to make this better, won't he?

GMs may also find the multitude of possible directions a little daunting. To help, here is one example of a route the player characters could take through the scenario.

[1] The family meeting takes place at the Caldwell house, and the first of Wayne's memories manifests.

[2] The next morning, the family go to the sermon at the megachurch (with the potential for another of Wayne's memories to manifest on the way in or out) and Angelica is humiliated by Richard in front of the whole congregation. He orders her to "testify" about her "sins". If Angelica does not attend this scene, she sees it on TV.

[3] Richard meets with Angelica and the family and orders them to bring him the person who performed the abortion (Eve).

[4] The player characters search for Eve (visiting the abandoned building downtown may bring back some of Angelica's memory of the procedure, getting Eve's contact details from Emma, etc.).

[5] A meeting is arranged with Eve. She explains what happened to her and Wayne, and offers the family a way to bring down the Pastor/lictor.

[6] The player characters could hand Eve over to the Pastor, or they could try to bring him down. The choice is theirs.

INTRODUCTION

The GM should read the following aloud, or present the information below to the players in their own words, to help set the scene.

The opening scene begins at 11:30pm on a Saturday night in the middle of summer. The city has been gripped by one of the worst heat waves in recent memory with temperatures soon expected to exceed the previous record high of 122 degrees Fahrenheit.

City authorities are advising residents to take basic precautions such as to drink more water and avoid drinks containing caffeine, sugar and alcohol. When going outside, light-colored clothing is encouraged to reflect the heat. Citizens should only travel for short periods. People with older relatives are encouraged to check in on them.

Over 100 heat-related deaths have already occurred in the region this summer, with the elderly and the homeless most at risk, and the death toll is only expected to rise. Despite this, the media continues to report that the government denies climate change is responsible for the escalating death toll. Protests across the country are growing as the public demands action must be taken.

For some time, the local news stations have also been reporting on the protests and demonstrations conducted by pro-life groups (some of which are openly sponsored by the church) that are mounting pressure on the state to outlaw *abortion, which is already illegal in most of the United States. Genesis has been to several such protests.*

Even in the middle of the night it is uncomfortably warm. The Caldwells, plus Tyler (who has just arrived, having been called over by Jessica) are gathered around the kitchen table at the Caldwell home to discuss what has just happened.

This scene allows Angelica to say her piece, Genesis to show some of her anger, and everyone to dial up the tension and conflict between characters as much as the players want. Jessica may ask Angelica to look at the sketch she has of Eve from the various witness testimonies as part of her case. Angelica will be able to identify that this is definitely the woman she saw at the clinic – but she might not.

When the gamemaster feels the time is right, the first "Fragments of Memory" scene should occur (see below).

CENTRAL SCENES

Fragments of Memory

At various points in the scenario, reality warps around the player characters (as long as Angelica or Tyler is present), replaying the most important of Wayne's memories. Suggestions of when to use the memories are also presented. These circumstances might not always occur in play, so the gamemaster is at liberty to present them as and when they think is appropriate.

Participating in any of these scenes should prompt a ***Keep it Together*** roll.

BIRTH

This scene works best at the start of the scenario, midway through the opening scene. While the player characters are arguing, one or more of them suddenly hear the sound of movement coming from Angelica's upstairs bedroom and the sound of a muffled, high-pitched cry.

The bedroom is now an operating theatre, dating somewhere around the 1980s at best guess. The walls are tiled and the smell of disinfectant and blood hang heavy in the air. A doctor in bloody surgical scrubs and long gloves is leaning over a woman on the operating table in the center of the room. The caesarean section to deliver Wayne has gone wrong and the mother is bleeding out.

The doctor turns to the player characters and demands that they help him by taking hold of the baby while he tries to stop the bleeding. He will not react to any provocation from the player characters. Any player characters that comply and hold the infant Wayne have their arm gripped by the dying mother who, in her dying breath whispers the child's name to them. Tyler is the only character familiar with Wayne at this point, and he will recognize the fingerprint-like birthmark on the boy's right cheek.

As the mother dies, the player characters present suddenly find themselves in Angelica's room as it normally would be. The character holding the baby finds they are holding one of Angelica's childhood soft toys.

LIFE

These scenes work best when the player characters are in the middle of a large group of people. Different key memories in Wayne's life flash before them. If the GM wishes, they can be split over a number of different scenes (e.g. as they walk into the megachurch, when they leave, or during the anti-abortion protest, etc.).

As the crowd ebbs and flows around the player characters, they witness various scenes playing out for a few seconds at a time before being obscured by those passing by around them.

- **Meeting Eve for the first time:** Wayne (early-20s) is walking through the crowd, dressed in a denim jacket and jeans. Too busy looking around, he fails to notice Eve (early-20s), wearing punk-rocker attire, cutting across his path, carrying a pile of medical textbooks. The two collide and she drops the books. Torn pages start to flutter down from above as Wayne apologizes. He offers to help pick up the books. They both reach for the same textbook and their hands touch. Still touching, they look at each other. Wayne introduces himself, and then Eve does too.

Tyler will recognize Wayne, younger than when he first met him. Any who saw the baby in the previous memory will notice the fingerprint-like birthmark on the right cheek, implying Wayne is the baby having grown up. Jessica will recognize Eve from the sketches she has of the abortionist from witness testimonies. Angelica will recognize Eve from the clinic.

- **Love in the City of the Dead:** Wayne and Eve (both early-20s), are naked, laying on top of a stone sarcophagus, passionately making love. Wayne gasps, Eve looks to the sky and cries in ecstasy. Her eyes turn to the player characters and a look of shock suddenly manifests on her face as if she sees them watching her and Wayne.

Angelica and Tyler will recognize the sarcophagus from their night together in the City of the Dead.

- **Draining the Fetus:** A blood-red light permeates the air. Wayne and Eve (both mid-20s) stand in surgical scrubs, inside an intricate chalk circle marked on the floor. In front of them, a covered form lays on an operating table. A beam of bright red light rushes up from the uterus of the covered form and into the interlocked hands of Wayne and Eve suspended above them. Both look strengthened and rejuvenated by the experience.

Wayne looks at Eve, smiles and proudly declares that "it works". He then locks eyes with the player characters. His face is now full of rage as he yells, "you shouldn't be here!" The area shakes with his yelling which swiftly merges with voices and sounds of the crowd as the Illusion returns to normal.

Trying to intervene or accost either Wayne or Eve in any of the scenes above results in the player characters realizing, perhaps too late, that they are confronting a random stranger in the crowd. Their actions return the Illusion to normal and Wayne's memory fades to nothing. No-one except the player characters saw anything unusual taking place. Depending on the player character's actions, this may result in tempers flaring as everyone is irritable and on edge during the heatwave.

DEATH

This scene works best when the player characters visit the megachurch after hours. The lights are off throughout most of the auditorium, illuminating the stage and exits, but leaving the rest of the area in darkness.

The stage takes the form of Wayne's apartment. Wayne lays beaten and broken on the floor, coughing up blood, surrounded by a group of young men dressed all in black. Each holds a weapon – a gun, a dagger, a baton, etc.

James stands over Wayne, a smile on his face. "Does that help you remember?" James asks, kicking Wayne.

Standing back with the others, Martin sighs. "He won't tell you. This is useless."Wayne tries to laugh through his mouth full of blood. "He's right. I'll never tell you who she is, or where she is. Never."

James and Martin proceed to break Wayne's arms and legs, stamping on them fiercely. His screams echo around the auditorium as he and the apartment are doused with gasoline. James pulls out a lighter and looks down at Wayne. "It's nothing personal, not for us," he says. Martin pours more gasoline over Wayne and adds "One way or another, you just had it coming, asshole." James drops the lighter, setting Wayne and the apartment alight as he and the other young men leave.

The fire quickly spreads into the auditorium as Wayne lays on the floor, burning and screaming. The player characters can smell the smoke in the air and feel the heat of the flames. If they leave the auditorium, the sound of the fire and Wayne's screams stop abruptly as the doors close behind them. The auditorium is normal and undamaged when they next look.

If the player characters rush towards the stage to rescue Wayne, they can drag his burning body off the stage and put out the fire by smothering it. Badly burned, Wayne looks up at the player characters, breathing painfully but with a look of gratitude in his eyes. The body then collapses into a pile of ash and the fires extinguish. The auditorium is normal and undamaged, and the pile of ash is gone when they next look. Any burns the player characters might have from dragging Wayne off the stage also vanish.

Genesis can recognize the last lines that James and Martin say to Wayne, echoing what they said when they attacked her. The GM should allow the player to make this connection rather than telling them directly as they describe the scene. Once she has made the connection, the GM can inform Genesis that she has seen both men at the church, even spoken to them on occasion, as they are part of Richard's personal guard. This realization may prompt a ***Keep it Together*** roll.

However, should the player fail to come to this realization, the GM could, at their discretion, give them some subtle hints to aid them (e.g. "Something those men said reminds you of something from your past, perhaps?").

Disadvantages and Dark Secrets

The gamemaster should make use of as many opportunities to play on these as possible. Examples for each player character include:

ANGELICA

The best times to call for Angelica to make a roll against her ***Repressed Memories*** Disadvantage are: if Angelica goes back to the abandoned downtown office building where she went for the abortion; or if she goes to see Emma who can describe to her what she saw in the operating room (see "Meeting Non-Player Characters: Emma Creed").

TYLER

If Tyler becomes passive or is lost for ideas, call for a roll against his ***Haunted*** Disadvantage. If the gamemaster gains any Hold, use one Hold to allow Wayne to possess him. Wayne grabs another character and demands that they find out whether or not the Pastor killed him, or he will start hurting people. The gamemaster is left to determine whether or not this is an idle threat.

JESSICA

Jessica's ***Rationalist*** Disadvantage can affect her in a couple of ways. If she is burned during *Fragments of Memory: Death* her wounds may not disappear (whereas they do for everyone else). Also, if she confronts anyone during *Fragments of Memory: Life* it may take her longer to realize that strangers she confronts are not Wayne or Eve (she still sees them whereas others see the truth).

If Jessica becomes involved in a gunfight, she must ***Keep it Together*** as memories of the fight from ten years ago come flooding back to her.

GEORGE

The gamemaster should be careful when asking for a roll against George's ***Depression*** Disadvantage. The best time to do this would be if Richard brings it up against him (see *Confrontation: Richard*), reminding him of his past failures.

GENESIS

Genesis's ***Oath of Revenge*** is very specific – it is against James and Martin. Rolls should only be called for when Genesis meets these NPCs and only after she has identified them as her attackers. This would most likely take place at the megachurch.

In the *Confrontation: Richard* scene, Richard reveals he knows that she has kept her desire to kill suppressed. This forces her to ***Keep it Together*** as she realizes the most important person in her life knows her darkest thoughts.

Meeting Non-Player Characters

PASTOR RICHARD WARD

During the Sermon

If the player characters go to the megachurch the morning after the first "Fragments of Memory" scene (i.e. Sunday morning), it is a televised Sunday sermon. The auditorium is packed with thousands of worshipers. Richard is not available before the sermon, but he can meet with the player characters afterwards before he heads to an abortion protest outside Phoenix City Hall.

For Richard's sermon, the GM is encouraged to improvise, working in the following statements and themes: expressing pleasure that the church is making a difference with its pro-life protests and that abortion will soon be outlawed in the State; condemning the growing violence on the streets as tempers shorten with the escalating heat, and the increasing number of mass shootings; voicing concern about the growing extremes in the political arena that threaten the stability and sanctity of the family as the young are being pulled away from traditional values, etc.

For GMs that would prefer assistance with this, example read-aloud text is provided on the next page to help describe the opening of the sermon, and some Bible quotes that they can draw upon for Richard to quote in support of his statements.

If Angelica is present during the sermon, Richard suddenly stops during his opening speech as he sees her in the crowd. Sensing what has happened to her, he calls her up to the stage. He begins by stating that he can feel the sorrow surrounding her. This is not her own sorrow, but the sorrow of those around her, and the sorrow of the Lord looking down in judgment upon her.

Richard gives Angelica the opportunity to admit it herself, but if she does not, he announces to the congregation that she has had an abortion. He then lays a hand upon her shoulder and Angelica is unable to speak while his hand remains there. Waves of disapproving murmurs echo throughout the congregation. Thousands of sets of hateful eyes focus on Angelica, all judging her while Richard reprimands her for the murder of the child that was growing in her womb. This prompts a ***Keep it Together*** roll.

Angelica must ***Act Under Pressure*** to escape Richard's grip without intending injury or ***Engage in Combat*** to try to escape by whatever means necessary. Failure in either case (or once Richard has finished his public reprimand) means that Angelica is escorted off stage and out of the auditorium by James and Martin as church security. Anything she yells or says doesn't carry very far and is drowned out by Richard's voice over the sound system.

If Angelica opts to admit what she has done on live television, Richard takes a more friendly approach, encouraging her to discuss what forced her to make this "terrible decision" (as he calls it). He follows her story by stating that there should have been another way and that the family should always stand by one and other for the benefit of all.

If Angelica starts to object with anything he says, or tries to defend her choice, he lays his hand on her shoulder with the same effect as above. Once Richard has finished his speech, he instructs her to rejoin her family. He then continues his sermon, focusing on the value of the family unit and the crime of abortion, finishing by stating he will be attending a demonstration outside Phoenix City Hall later that afternoon and encourages all of his congregation and viewers to join him.

After the Sermon

If the player characters approach Richard directly after the sermon, the meeting can take place in his office above the megachurch lobby. If Angelica is with them, and the events of "During the Sermon" (above) have taken place, this will become the "Confrontation: Richard" scene.

If Angelica is not present and he has not yet seen her to sense the truth for himself, Richard should be able to get the information out of Genesis (if she is present). He will want to see Angelica at the Caldwell home, or have her brought to his office for spiritual guidance. Either case then leads to the "Confrontation: Richard" scene.

At the Demonstration

Later in the day, Richard is available at the demonstration outside City Hall, downtown. He stands on a makeshift stage looking over hundreds of protesters wielding placards covered with anti-abortion statements (e.g. "abortion is murder", "rights for the unborn", etc.), demanding over a loud speaker that abortion should once again be made completely illegal in the state of Arizona and the whole United States of America.

If Angelica is present and meets him for the first time, the scene can play out much like "During the Sermon" (above). If she is not present, Richard will meet with other player characters present at a nearby coffee shop when he takes a break from his public speaking.

If Angelica goes to see him after already attending the sermon, then she is intercepted by James and Martin and moved away towards local police officers overseeing events in order to prevent her from disrupting their demonstration.

The Opening of Pastor Ward's Sermon

The lights brighten over the stage and dim slightly in the rest of the auditorium. Uplifting music begins to play and a wave of applause and cheering spreads through the congregation as Pastor Ward steps onto the stage. A broad smile is on his face, his hands are held aloft as he waves to the congregation, microphone in hand. He takes his place centerstage and takes a bow. He holds the microphone between both hands, as when brought together in prayer, closes his eyes and raises his face towards the ceiling.

"Praise be to the Lord on this most wonderful day! Praise be to Jesus for showing us the way! Praise be to the Holy Spirit that gives us the strength to stand together! Praise be! Hallelujah!"

[The congregation responds with a passionate "Hallelujah!"]

"HALLELUJAH!"

The congregation responds with an even louder "HALLELUJAH!", followed by more cheering and applause. The Pastor waits, smiling, for the music and the cheers to subside before continuing. He now holds the microphone in one hand and looks around the congregation as he addresses them.

"Praise be indeed. Today, my brothers and sisters, we once again take a stand against those who would seek to defy the word of God. The Lord Himself told us, THOU SHALT NOT MURDER!" ["AMEN!" from the congregation] *"Exodus 20:13."*

"We are making a difference, my brothers and sisters, yes we are. We are opening the eyes of the masses to the truth. Joel told us that the land would become desolate, a desert waste, where innocent blood has been, and continues to be, shed. Joel 3:19. Well, I tell you, my family, that our land is drenched in the blood of the most innocent." [Cries of sadness rise from the congregation] *"The land burns with the heat of the Lord's anger. All because people have been blinded by words like 'choice' and 'convenience'. There is no CHOICE for YOU to make!"*

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. I Corinthians 6:19-20. Can I hear an Amen!?" ["AMEN!" from the congregation] *"Amen. They will not remain blind for much longer. Soon, the vile act of abortion will be made illegal for cursed is anyone who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person. Then all the people shall say, "AMEN!"* ["AMEN!" and rapturous applause from the congregation] *"Deuteronomy 27:25. Amen."*

"Today, our voices will echo through the streets of our fine city outside city hall. I encourage you all to join me and let your voices proclaim the word of God so that more will finally understand the truth. But, my friends, my heart is heavy with the sad fact that this is just one of many fronts of an ongoing battle to protect our families and our loved ones. There is so much violence out there on the streets today. Mass shootings, the ever-rising tide of extremism – these things HAVE TO STOP for us to live as the Lord intended, so that the sanctity of the family can be preserved. We must be forever vigilant so that those we love most, our children, are not pulled away from those time-honored, traditional values that were laid down so long ago in the Good Book." [Applause and cheering from the congregation]

If Angelica is Present

At this point, the GM can proceed with Richard noticing Angelica and calling for her to come up to the stage. This conversation should proceed organically. The GM can use the following statements in Richard's humiliation of Angelica in front of the congregation.

"But child, do you not realize what you have done? You have destroyed a life created by the Lord Himself! This is what the Lord says – your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself. Isiah 44:24. That child was made by God, and you murdered it!"

"Are you not grateful for the life you have been given from your own mother? Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers? Job 31:15. What if she had decided to murder you in her womb? Think of the life you would never have had!"

"Don't you even care what that child may have grown up to be? The word of the Lord came to me, saying, Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations. Jeremiah 1:4-5. What great things your child could have performed, we will never know, because of you and your selfishness. How DARE you interfere with God's Divine Plan for us all!?"

In response to each statement, the congregation should boo and jeer at Angelica.

Not Attending Church

It is possible that the player characters may choose not to attend the church service on the Sunday morning. This may happen due to various reasons:

- The previous evening's events may have been too much for them.
- Angelica may be taken to hospital for an examination, leading to her being kept in overnight (especially following the curious discovery that the fetus inside her is dead despite there being no sign of any medical procedure having taken place). Her family may wish to stay beside her through the night and following morning.
- Jessica may be busy investigating the scene at the abandoned downtown office building or searching for Emma.

If this occurs, the GM can still make progress towards the "Confrontation: Richard" scene. If Genesis splits away from the rest of the family and goes to the church, Richard can meet her after the sermon and enquire why the other player characters were not present in the congregation. Alternatively, if Genesis does not attend the sermon, Richard can either call her, or go to the Caldwell house and make the same inquiry in person.

In either situation, Richard states he was worried by the absence of such valued members of his congregation and asks if anything is wrong. Additionally, he states that he senses something deeply troubling that needs to be addressed with all of the player characters. He insists upon a meeting with everyone, which allows him to learn what happened to Angelica. This then leads to the "Confrontation: Richard" scene.

MIKE

After the first "Fragments of Memory" scene, any player character looking out of a front-facing window can see Mike watching the house from the other side of the street. He is wearing his usual boiler-suit and shuffling his feet nervously.

If anyone goes out to confront him, he will state he was just passing and was worried that his friends (Genesis and George) might be in trouble. He has sensed the Illusion break around them and come to investigate, genuinely concerned for the safety of his friends. He won't reveal any more than this, but if told Genesis and George are safe, or if ordered to leave, he will promptly limp off in the direction of the megachurch.

Later, he may be found at the megachurch, cleaning the auditorium before and after the sermon. Genesis or George can convince him to let them and other player characters into the building later if required.

WAYNE MYNATT

Tyler may try to convince Wayne to reveal the location of his notebooks early, in order to give them an advantage in defeating Richard, when his supernatural power comes to their attention. This requires an ***Influence Other*** roll. If a *success with complications* is achieved, Wayne gains 1 Hold over Tyler as if he had achieved a *success with complications* against his ***Haunted*** Disadvantage.

The key to the self-storage locker is hidden under a loose paving slab in the courtyard behind the back door to Wayne's old apartment. It is still there when Tyler goes to collect it and it opens the locker at the downtown self-storage facility.

The notebooks do not contain any "offensive" spells that could be used in combat. However, they do contain enough information for Tyler to work out what happened during the abortion if he hears Emma's account or Angelica's recollection of her repressed memories (assuming they have not met Eve and learned the truth from her already).

EMMA CREED

If the player characters go looking for Emma, they can easily find her. She's been at a local goth nightclub after getting Angelica home, cradling a bottle of absinthe. If they don't go looking for her, Emma can phone Angelica, looking to see if she's alright after the events of last night. Emma will meet her, or any other player character that knows her, if they want a meeting.

Emma can give her account of what happened last night (Triggering Angelica's ***Repressed Memories***, if present). She can also explain how she heard about the illegal clinic, and that she didn't want anything bad to happen to Angelica. She still has the phone number for Eve and will give this to the player characters if they ask for it. Emma will warn them to be careful and state that they should only send texts to Eve, not call her directly.

EVE WALKER

The only way to realistically get in touch with Eve is via text message after getting her phone number from Emma (above). She does not answer any calls, only text messages. The easiest way to arrange a meeting is to pretend that they are a new client looking for an abortion. Using any other premise to arrange a meeting may require an ***Influence Other*** roll if the gamemaster wants the potential to add complications.

Eve will set up a meeting that night at another deserted office building in the downtown area, not far from the one Angelica went to. If Tyler is present, she can explain what happened to her following Wayne's murder and her true motivations behind the abortions she performs (to prolong her life and shield her soul from detection, etc.). Otherwise, she will be evasive about what she tells the other player characters without a successful ***Influence Other*** roll.

If the player characters describe any scenes from Wayne's memories that she appeared in, she will be shocked and will demand they reveal how they know such things. This may lead to some very pointed questions being directed at Tyler, demanding that he explain what he has done. Eve will be shocked that she nearly harvested Wayne's soul to protect her own, wondering what torment that could have meant for him, and will be furious with Wayne for botching his summoning attempt which left her lover attached to him. This has the potential for an intense scene and the GM should let it develop (or escalate) naturally.

Setting up a meeting like this could help to ally Eve with the player characters, or provide them a chance to hand her over to Richard (see "Confrontation: Eve"). However, there is also the issue that Jessica has been trying to track down Eve for nearly two years in order to bring her to justice – a conviction that could secure her promotion. Will she willingly put this aside for the good of her family, or will the other player characters have to convince Jessica not to take Eve into custody?

THOMAS DAVIS

Thomas can be found in his apartment near the university and will meet with any of the player characters if requested. He will help any way he can, especially if it helps Genesis, but ideally from afar (e.g. research). An ***Influence Other*** roll can get him to perform something more hands-on (e.g. providing a distraction in any plan they might come up with, etc.). He is a resource for the player characters to use in whatever way they wish.

He has been keeping an eye on Genesis from afar for some time and has seen how involved she has become with the Church of Heavenly Unity. Thomas doesn't trust Richard, especially as his inner circle seems almost like a cult to him. He's done some research on Richard and can't find any information on him before 1980. It is as if he just appeared with a fortune that he used to build the megachurch.

Thomas didn't approach Genesis with this information earlier because he was scared that she wouldn't believe him, or that she would get angry at the implication of him spying on her.

JAMES HAMMOND AND MARTIN CAIN

The GM should attempt to have James and Martin interact with the player characters, even if only briefly, wherever possible. This helps to accentuate the impact when they are later revealed to be Genesis's attackers.

The easiest opportunity for this is when the player characters attend the sermon on Sunday morning. James and Martin are among the guards in black uniforms ushering worshipers through metal detectors before passing through into the lobby. Perhaps Genesis forgot to take her keys out of her pocket, meaning they intervene to sweep her with a handheld metal detector. The GM can use this opportunity to point out she knows them by name and has spoken to them before.

If Angelica has to be escorted off stage during the sermon, it is James and Martin that are called upon to escort her. The GM can then mention to Genesis and George, as the two members of the family most involved in the church, that they recognize the two men, having talked to them in the past.

If the player characters gain entry to the megachurch after hours (breaking in or after Mike leaves a door unlocked for them, etc.), they hear sounds of a fight coming from a nearby room close to where they are trying to get to.

James and Martin are kicking Mike while he is on the ground, curled up in a fetal position. They are laughing as they do it, telling him: "The Pastor told you to stay away from the girl and her dad, but you wouldn't listen, so this is what you get" (referring to him visiting the Caldwell house, see above).

If the player characters have not experienced "Fragments of Memory: Death" at this point, and especially if Genesis is present, James and Martin can echo their lines from the attack during this encounter instead. This may allow Genesis to identify them as her attackers in the same manner as outlined in "Fragments of Memory: Death".

This encounter could result in combat, especially if Genesis is present and she has identified James and Martin as her attackers. Once rescued, this could be an opportune moment for Mike to reveal his true nature to the player characters (and inform them of Richard being a lictor) and beg them to help free him from his torment.

CONFRONTATION

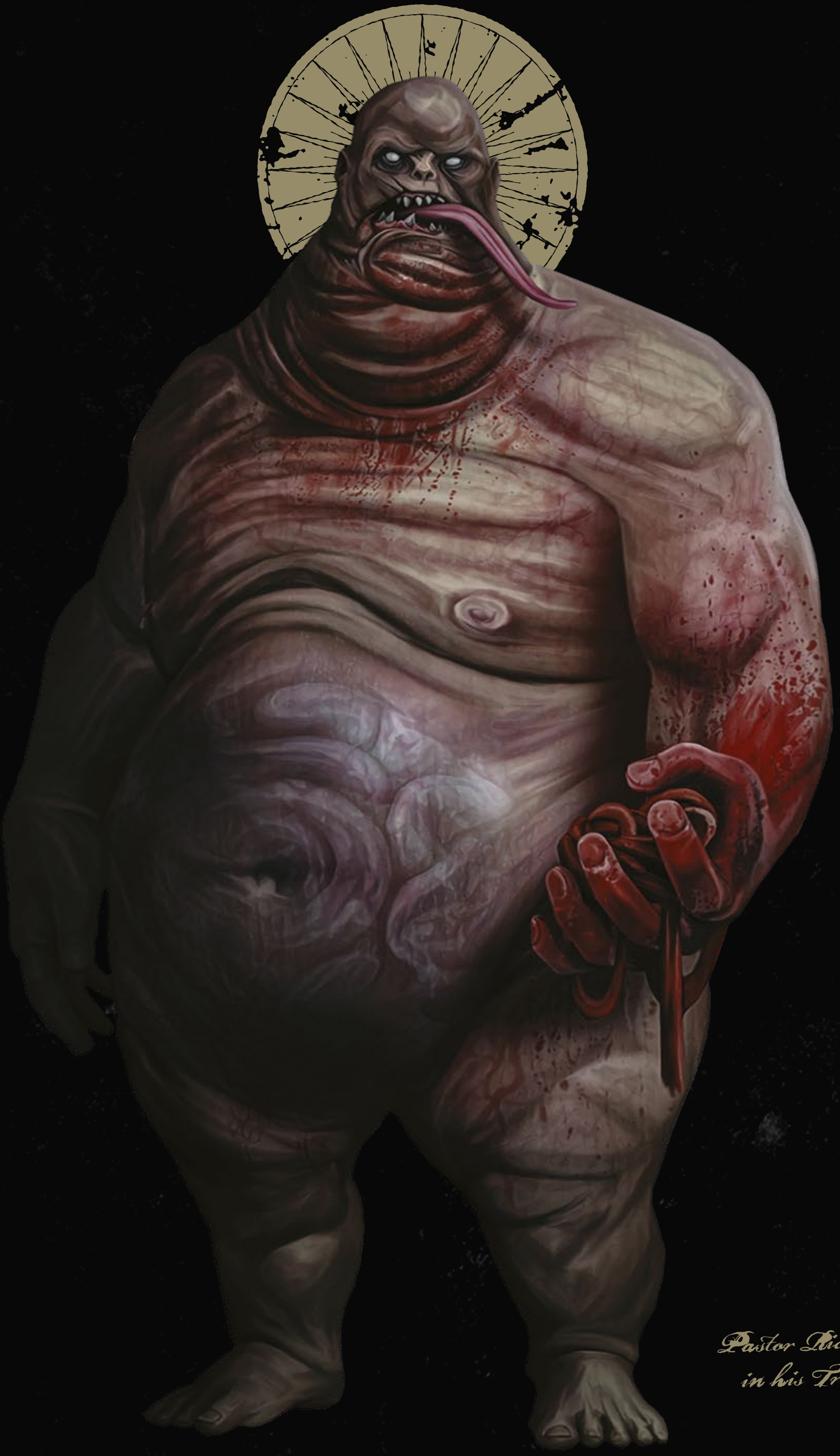
Richard

Once Richard learns of what has happened to Angelica, he will want to have a private meeting with her and the other player characters. This could be in his office at the megachurch, or at the Caldwell home, depending on whether the player characters go to him, or he goes to them (with a car of security guards, including James and Martin, to call upon should he need them).

He begins by stating that Angelica has been through a terrible ordeal. What was done to her was not a medical procedure, it was magic. Others of his congregation have been subjected to this terrible blasphemy, but Angelica can purify herself of her sins by handing over the person responsible to him for judgment in the eyes of God. This way, it will be done quietly, without the need for the authorities getting involved, and their names being dragged through the inevitable media attention.

The player characters will no doubt voice objections to this, especially with Jessica being a law enforcement officer. Richard rebukes each player character, combining his argument with a veiled threat hinting at their Dark Secrets and backgrounds (e.g. threatening Jessica that he has the Chief of Police in his pocket; telling George that a word from him could irreversibly destroy his career; saying to Genesis that she has done so well keeping her desire to kill suppressed, it would be a shame to stop now; etc.).

Richard refuses to answer any questions they might have for him on other subjects and gives them till midnight tomorrow to bring the person responsible to him at the church. After that, he says he will have to take matters into his own hands. James, Martin and other security guards can then show them out should they not wish to leave. The security guards can also enter the scene if it looks like a fight is going to break out. They are all armed with pistols, which should dissuade combat from occurring.



Pastor Richard Ward
in his True Shape

Eve

There are a number of ways a meeting with Eve could go: she could be lured to a meeting so that the player characters can capture her, the player characters could learn more about what is going on, or she could even ally herself with the player characters against the lictor.

Eve has been in hiding for a long time. She is cautious, bordering on paranoid. An ***Influence Other*** roll is required for her to assist the player characters moving against Richard. *A successful roll* will secure Eve's help, but she states that she requires something from Richard – either an item of significance to him (the crucifix he always wears, a ring he always wears, etc.) or part of him (bodily fluids such as blood or sweat, fingernail clippings, a hair, etc.). *A success with complications* also secures Eve's help, but in addition to her request above, she demands that they bring her a person to drain their life essence, or they let her take ten years off each of their lives (both would be used to extend her own life). Going through with either demand prompts a ***Keep it Together*** roll as they effectively aid in murder, or feel their life being ripped out of them.

How the player characters get the item/fluid/nail/hair is up to them. They could break into Richard's apartment at the megachurch complex looking for a comb, or ask Mike to get a hair for them. Alternatively, they could accidentally cut Richard with a ring during a handshake, etc. The GM should let the player characters use their creativity to obtain the option of their choice. In any case, this shouldn't lead to direct confrontation with the lictor at this stage, but it would be an opportune moment to encounter James and Martin beating up Mike (see above). This could also provide Eve with two victims, should Genesis in particular desire this fate.

Eve explains she is not particularly good in a fight, but she can use the item/fluid/nail/hair to make a weapon that can be used against Richard. In her van, Eve has a collection of various body parts, organs and fetuses preserved in jars filled with yellowish liquid. These are a combination of components required for various Death Magic rituals and items she can use to create magical tools and weapons.

Eve selects one of the fetuses that is not fully formed, with the umbilical cord and placenta still attached. She submerges it in a bowl of blood that is surrounded by five lit black candles while keeping hold of the placenta. She makes a small cut on her forearm with a small knife and intones a short phrase in a language the player characters are not familiar with. The placenta twitches and latches onto the wound like a leech, sucking her blood which writhes down the umbilical cord to the fetus. Eve seems to age a number of years before the player characters' eyes as she continues to chant. In the bowl, the fetus squirms, its mouth opening and closing as if screaming, as cuts start to open across its body in a design of swirling patterns and symbols. As Eve completes her chant, the fetus slowly becomes still again and the placenta releases its grip on the wound on her forearm. The cuts and wounds remain open all over the fetus.

With the fetus prepared, Eve explains how it can be used by the player characters (see below) stressing the fact that it only works when in line of sight of its target. She gives it to any player character that wants it, telling them that under no circumstances can they let Richard get hold of the fetus (as Richard could use it to destroy Eve). Eve has invested part of her life-force in the fetus, which provides a connection straight back to her that could be exploited by those that are sufficiently magically adept.

Because Eve does not want to get involved in actual combat, she offers to have her van ready with the engine running outside to provide them with a quick getaway should anything go wrong.

USING THE FETUS

An item belonging to the intended target (i.e. whatever is taken from the lictor) needs to be placed into the mouth of the fetus and pushed down its throat for it to create a connection to its target. The user must make a small cut on their forearm and place the placenta over it. It will then attach itself to them, sucking out a small amount of their blood with each use. This can be removed later with a slow but firm pull.

Wrapping the umbilical cord around the neck of the fetus and pulling tightly will make the target feel like they are being strangled. This will hurt the target, and with a little luck may restrain them too (depending how well they roll).

Using the fetus in this way requires a **roll +Soul** to use (consult the table below for effects) as they strangle the fetus with its own umbilical cord. If the target takes damage from this, the eyes of the fetus open and it emits a pitiful cry as it writhes in the player characters hands, as if it were alive although it is clearly dead. Tiny drops of blood flow from the corner of its eyes, from its nose, from the corners of its mouth, and from its ears.

The first time a player character witnesses this, they also need to ***Keep it Together***. All harm ignores armor as well as the lictors thick skin.

(15+) The target takes **3 Harm** and claw at their neck, as if to remove a noose that isn't really there. The next roll against the target has a +2 modifier.

(10-14) The target takes **1 Harm** but is still able to attack or act normally.

(-9) The fetus has no effect, but the target now instinctively knows who has the fetus and that they have tried to use it against them.

ENDING

The scenario will most likely end in one of three ways: the player characters attack Richard; they hand over Eve to Richard; or Richard attacks them for not handing over Eve.

In each instance, the only other potential opponent present is Mike. Richard does not want his security guards to see either of their true forms if things get out of hand, as he would have to dispose of them too, so they are not present.

When combat begins, Richard stops time in the area, and bends space so that all exits from the immediate area loop back on themselves. There will be no intervention from outside forces and the player characters cannot escape once they have entered his presence. Richard is supremely confident in his abilities to eliminate them.

If the player characters do not meet with Richard at midnight, as instructed, he will appear wherever they are and manipulate the Illusion as described above before trying to beat the truth out of them about what they know of the abortionist. He will then kill them.

If the player characters hand Eve over to Richard, he smiles, saying he has been waiting for this for a long time, before squeezing her head between his hands until it pops like a balloon. He then instructs Mike to dispose of the player characters. If he fails, or joins their side (requiring an ***Influence Other*** roll), Richard reveals his true form (prompting a ***Keep it Together*** roll) and attacks.

If Eve is left outside where the attack takes place, she drives off once they are inside. She is still looking out for herself and has given them all the help she intends to.

If the player characters attack Richard, it will most likely be in the megachurch auditorium at midnight, when he has asked them to bring the abortionist to him. Mike is present, and once a combat starts, an ***Influence Other*** roll can convince him to fight with the player characters.

In the event that the player characters have been given the fetus by Eve and they roll badly (i.e. -9), Richard will attempt to take the fetus from the user when possible and crush it. This will break every bone in Eve's body and kill her instantly.

If reduced to **4 Wounds** or less, Richard's next action will be to use his magic to return to the Citadel of Binah for healing. He heals **3 Wounds** upon arrival. Time and space then return to normal. The player characters can learn from Mike where he has gone, and how to get there, if they wish to finish the job and kill him, but this does put them deep in the lion's den. After making any attack on him in the Citadel, Binah's servants that are present will attempt to restrain and crucify them for crimes against the Archon.

If the lictor is destroyed, and Wayne has not already given up the location of his notebooks, should Tyler survive, he will tell him their location before leaving him for the last time. Furthermore, the chains fall from Mike's wings and he will be forever in the player characters' debt. He warns them that they have seen too much, and that they might well be in danger from other forces of the Archons. They are now in a very difficult position: they can stay, but they will eventually be found; or they can run, and keep running, but nowhere is safe. As per the theme of the scenario, there are no good options or choices left for them.

Mike can offer Genesis, George, and any others that want to follow, passage to a place far from here that could give them a head start in their flight. He will remain with Genesis and George, going where they go. He can open a gateway to the City of the Dead, leaving the player characters looking up the hill towards the Empty Chapel of the Demiurge and its Guardian. Where they go and what they do from here is another story.

Potential options for continuing the story in subsequent scenarios include: Tracking down Eve after she left them to face the lictor alone; what happens if the player characters decide to explore more of the Citadel of Binah; or what happens to them as they flee the city and try to find somewhere safe for them to try to rebuild their lives.

NPC ATTRIBUTES

Pastor Richard Ward

Home: Elysium.

Creature type: lictor serving the Archon Binah.

Combat [4], **Influence** [4], **Magic** [5].

Description: see "The Non-Player Characters: Pastor Richard Ward, lictor of Binah".

Abilities:

- *Thick skin:* All harm reduced by -1.
- *Gigantic:* In his true form Richard cannot be grappled or knocked over in close combat.
- *Monstrous form:* Humans who see Richard's true form must ***Keep it Together*** to not panic.

Combat [Powerful]

- Attack many targets simultaneously.
- Smash through any physical barrier.
- Crush anything he holds.
- Backhand slap.

Influence [Powerful]

- Threaten someone, outright or through veiled implications.
- Friends in high places across the city.
- Stealthily manipulate individuals/groups/organizations.
- Enchanting voice that captivates listeners.

Magic [Exceptional]

- Teleport to the healing chamber in the Citadel of Binah.
- See peoples' and creatures' true natures.
- Destroy mechanical/electronic object.
- Manipulate the surrounding environment.
- Spread Binah's Principle through his sermons.

Attacks

Fights with his bare hands or manipulating the Illusion. When he is severely injured he will teleport to the Citadel of Binah to be healed.

Unarmed: Backhand [2] [Distance: arm, the victim flies through the air]; Grapple [1] [Distance: arm, the victim must ***Act Under Pressure*** to get away]; Crush [3] [Distance: arm, target must be held]; Throw back [2] [Distance: arm, target is thrown several meters]

Magic: Manipulate the Illusion [2] [Range: field, area]; Destroy mechanical/electronic object [-] [Range: room, destroys a small object such as a phone or a weapon].

Wounds & Harm Moves

Wounds: ○○○○○○○○○ ☠

- Ignore the injuries.
- Richard's false form starts to falter (A PC Sees Through the Illusion).
- Steaming yellow liquid squirts out of the wounds.
- Screams, shattering all glass in the vicinity.
- A part of Richard's skeleton breaks and protrudes through his skin.
- Dazed.
- Dies.

Mike

Home: Elysium.

Creature type: Fallen Seraphim angel in the service of Richard (the lictor).

Combat [3], **Influence** [1], **Magic** [2].

Description: see "The Non-Player Characters: Mike, Enslaved Seraphim".

Abilities:

- *Lightning fast:* All ranged attacks against Mike are modified with -2.
- *Former Winged Humanoid:* Mike was once able to fly, but his wings are broken and are dragged behind him as he walks.
- *Disembodied whispers [Angelic Madness]:* Hears voices of creatures long since gone.

Combat [Considerable]

- Attack two opponents at once.
- Move a considerable distance in a single leap.
- Natural warrior [This being's unarmed attacks deal **+1 Harm**].

Influence [Weak]

- Reveal memories of Metropolis.

Magic [Novice]

- Senses weakness/changes in the Illusion.
- Open gateways to Metropolis or Elysium

Attacks

Fights unarmed and with great desperation.

Unarmed: Fists [2] [Distance: arm]; Grapple [1] [Distance: arm, the victim must ***Act Under Pressure*** to get away]; Attack two opponents [2] [Distance: arm].

Wounds & Harm Moves

Wounds: ○○○○○ ☠

- Ignore the injuries.
- With a scream, Mike stretches out his broken wings, splattering the area with blood.
- The attack destroys one of the eyes (*+1 on next roll*).
- Curls up in a ball and begs for mercy.
- Dies.

ANGELICA CALDWELL, STUDENT

• Who You Are

You've lived in Phoenix, Arizona, all your life. You grew up in the North Mountain Village where you still live with your parents, Jessica and George. Jessica is a detective in the Phoenix Police Department (she doesn't talk much about her work, especially after getting badly injured in the line of duty ten years ago), and your father is an artist. You have a sister, Genesis. You and Genesis attend the nearby Arizona State University West Campus. Genesis is studying philosophy. You are studying art, wanting to follow in your father's footsteps.

Things started going downhill 18 months ago. Genesis was attacked by two masked men after leaving a party. She was rescued by a man passing by, Pastor Richard Ward of the local Church of Heavenly Unity. Neither Genesis nor Richard saw the faces of the two men. With no suspects and no way to identify the two men, there was nothing the police could do. Ever since then, Genesis has been passionately involved with the church and helping out in the local community.

At first it was a coping mechanism to overcome the trauma of the attack. Genesis threw herself into her faith and tried to convince the rest of the family to follow. Your father has embraced the church, especially after the Pastor gave him a big commission to do some work. It's done wonders for George's self-esteem as he's battled with depression for years. However, your mother hasn't converted just yet. Jessica's ability to engage with faith has been eroded by the stresses of her work.

Eventually, Genesis tried ramming the Bible down your throat one too many times. In protest, you started reading books on witchcraft in her company. It shut her up, but it has driven a wedge between you.

Your protest sparked an interest in the occult. You knew your best friend at university was into that kind of thing, so you went to her. Emma Creed was a romantic goth and fellow art student. She knew all the best nightclubs in town, all the best bars, and she first introduced you to Tyler Egerton when you wanted to know more about the occult.

You'd seen Tyler around before (most notably when he tried to ask Genesis out on a date about ten months ago – she turned him down). You thought he was handsome, and he knew a lot about magic and witchcraft, so you made the first move. One thing led to another and you've been together for about eight months.

Always willing to try new things, two months ago Tyler invited you to try a weird hallucinogenic drug. While some details are fuzzy, there are things you remember with perfect clarity. After taking the drug, the world changed. The room around you became a stone chamber with a sarcophagus in the center. Through a doorway, you could see a vast graveyard extending up a mountainous hill. Mist clung to the ground between innumerable crypts. On top of the hill stood a huge gleaming white mausoleum, stretching hundreds of feet into the sky. Lights danced in the fog and a rhythmic chanting filled the air. You and Tyler made love on the sarcophagus. It was the best sex ever.

You awoke the next morning in Tyler's room but there was still dust and stone chips from the sarcophagus under your fingernails. That wasn't a hallucination. You know what you saw was real, but you can't explain it.

A few weeks later, you missed your period. When morning sickness started, you worried you might be pregnant. The nurse at the university offered a confidential pregnancy test and confirmed your suspicions. Even though Tyler had always worn a condom, you'd heard they didn't always work. You'd been so careful before, you never thought this could happen.

Your world came crashing down around you. You were too young to bring up a child. It would destroy your chances of finishing university, as you'd be a full-time mother, without the chance to study. Then there were your parents – how would they react? The potential social consequences for them were terrible. Your father had just started to get his career moving after years of failures. Your mother was looking at a promotion in the police department. In your eyes, something like this hanging over them could seriously damage their careers. What if they kicked you out on the street, wanting nothing to do with their failure of a daughter? Would Tyler be able to take you in? Would he even want a child, being only a couple of years older than you?

After a seemingly endless cycle of contemplation and despair, you reached out to Emma for help. You told her everything and she suggested a possible solution. Emma knew an abortionist that operated illegally. You couldn't risk going to the hospital – the church was leading a wave of anti-abortion protests, advocating the sanctity of life. Genesis might be at one such protest. Tyler's parents were doctors. What if any of them saw you? What if word got out about the procedure? You couldn't take the chance. The abortionist guaranteed confidentially, was professional, and charged only a token fee for supplies. Seeing no other way out of your dilemma, you asked Emma to accompany you to the clinic.

You remember the door to the clinic at the end of the cramped alleyway in downtown. Emma stayed with you until the doctor called you in. The doctor, a friendly older woman, said from the outset there would be no names and no judgments made. She administered the sedative and everything went black. You were groggy all the way home, but Emma got you there. You intended just to keep quiet and pretend the whole thing never happened, but under the influence of the sedative your mother thought you'd been on drugs.

Jessica pushed and pushed, and you finally snapped. You couldn't help it, but now, the truth is out in the open. Jessica has called Tyler to come to the house immediately. A family meeting has been called and everyone is in the kitchen.

• Relations

Tyler Egerton (+1) – Your lover. You still love him and you hope he still loves you too.

Jessica Caldwell (+1) – The mother you've always looked up to.

George Caldwell (+1) – The talented father whose art you've always loved.

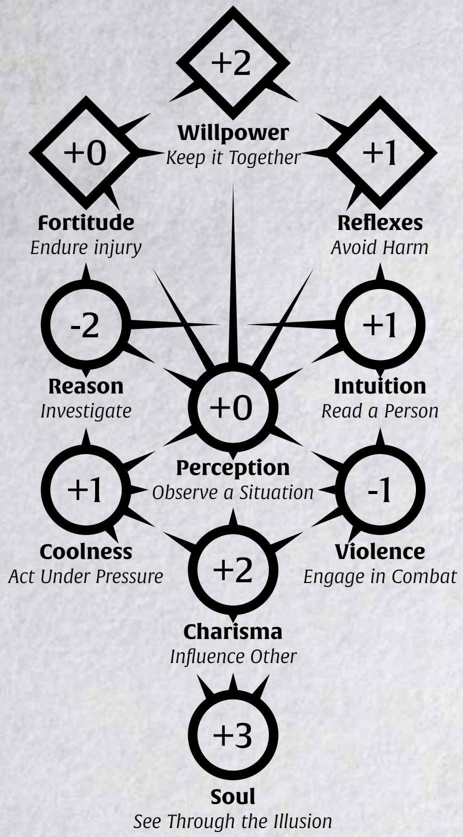
Genesis Caldwell (+0) – Your sister. Her fanatical faith has driven a wedge between you.

Emma Creed (+2) – Your best friend and confidant. She's always been there for you.

Thomas Davis (+1) – Genesis's ex-boyfriend. He's a good man at heart.

The Abortionist (+0) – You don't know her name, but she helped you. That matters.

• Attributes


+2
Willpower
Keep it Together
+0
Fortitude
Endure injury
+1
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
-2
Reason
Investigate
+0
Perception
Observe a Situation
+1
Intuition
Read a Person
+1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
-1
Violence
Engage in Combat
+2
Charisma
Influence Other
+3
Soul
See Through the Illusion

• Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

• Stability

☐	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

• Advantage

• Stubborn

Whenever you push yourself to the limit to overcome a threat, **roll +Soul**:

(15+) Get 3 Edges. You may spend them any time during the scene.

(10–14) Get 2 Edges. You may spend them any time during the scene.

(–9) Get 1 Edge, but you push yourself past your breaking point. Decrease **Stability (−2)**.

Edges:

- *Refuse to give up*: Postpone the effects of a critical injury until you have made it out of the threat's reach.
- *Will over skill*: **Roll +Willpower** instead of the normal attribute whenever you avoid or fight whatever is threatening you.
- *Steel yourself*: Break free from a supernatural effect.

• Dark Secret: Occult Experience

• Disadvantage

• Repressed Memories

You have repressed a particularly unpleasant event from your past, but the memory of it sometimes rises to the surface. It could be a crime or some horrible thing you have done, been subjected to, or witnessed. The GM decides the nature of your repressed memory, usually based on your Dark Secrets. *In situations associated with your repressed memories*, **roll +0** to determine if the memories resurface:

(15+) You continue to suppress the memories.

(10–14) The memories partly resurface, taking the form of flashbacks and/or hallucinations. You must ***Keep it Together***.

(–9) You are overwhelmed by your repressed memories, completely losing yourself to them. The GM makes a hard Move and you reduce **Stability (−2)**.

TYLER EGERTON, STUDENT

Who You Are

You've lived in Phoenix, Arizona, all your life. Your parents (Gary and Charlotte) both work at the John C. Lincoln North Mountain Hospital just to the south of the North Mountain Park. They are both well-respected doctors and always on call. You spent more time with nannies growing up than you did with your parents.

Your parents decided that you would go to the Arizona State University West Campus to study medicine. You didn't object and enrolled three years ago. You quickly developed a fascination with anatomy and would spend hours in the university library exploring the subject. That was where you met the strange man with the fingerprint-like birthmark on his right cheek. The man that would change the course of your life – Wayne Mynatt.

Wayne was an alumnus of the university with access to the facilities. He had also studied medicine. He helped with your studies, seeing a lot of himself in you. He was your first true friend and brought you out of your shell. It was Wayne that introduced you to the occult and showed you that this world was an illusion.

Wayne wanted to live forever. In his quest to make this happen, he discovered Death Magic. Eve Walker (Wayne's on-and-off lover, who you got to know through him) also desired immortality and practiced Death Magic. Wayne showed you various ways to see through the Illusion (e.g. divination, drugs, rituals). Together you walked through the crypts of the City of the Dead and gazed upon the entrance of the Empty Chapel atop the hill where it is said that God Himself is buried (though the Guardian won't let you inside). Your feelings waver somewhere between awe and dread when you remember those sights.

You became Wayne's protégé, learning the art of Death Magic. Two years ago, Wayne died in a fire at his apartment and Eve vanished. The case was closed mysteriously quickly, labeled as an "accident". You were devastated. Wayne had promised you so much knowledge, and he was your best friend. Instinct told you this was no accident – this was murder. You wanted vengeance.

You started investigating. At first, you thought Eve might be responsible, given she vanished around the same time. But after interviewing neighbors, they claimed they saw people fleeing the scene just before the fire. After months of searching, you have identified these people as security guards employed by the Church of Heavenly Unity, run by the influential televangelist Pastor Richard Ward. The Pastor has friends in high places (e.g. the chief of police attends the church). You believe he was behind the investigation's swift conclusion. Could Wayne have been killed on his orders? Maybe they made Eve "disappear" too? If so, why? You know you need evidence before making any accusations.

In the meantime, you've tried to continue your study of Death Magic using notes that Wayne left behind. 12 months ago, you tried to call his soul back from the other side to find out what happened, but something went wrong. Now, what is left of him haunts you, demanding vengeance. Only this will satisfy his spirit. To incentivize you, he has promised to reveal the location of notebooks that contain all his gathered magical knowledge if you are successful.

After the ritual to summon Wayne's soul went wrong, you haven't dared try to summon Eve. While it would confirm whether or not she is actually dead, you can't take the risk of having two souls haunting you if something went wrong again. You suspect that she is most likely dead though.

You knew that in order to get any evidence against the Pastor, you would need access to the Church of Heavenly Unity. To avoid suspicion, you needed a cover to explain your presence there. That's when you met Genesis Caldwell. The Pastor had saved her from an attack by masked men several months ago. Neither Genesis nor Richard saw the faces of the men. Genesis subsequently joined the church. That gave you the idea. She could be your way in.

You attempted to seduce Genesis about ten months ago, hoping that being her boyfriend would provide ample cover to explore the church from within. However, your attempts failed. Her faith and loyalty to the church superseded any carnal longing. A mutual friend, Emma Creed, an art student interested in the occult, introduced you to Angelica, Genesis's sister, shortly after Genesis turned you down. Angelica had an interest in the occult and she liked you a lot. She made the first move. You started dating her and you have been together for about eight months.

Even though you believed you were making progress, Wayne was becoming impatient. He threatened to possess you and find out the truth for himself if you didn't get answers soon. Terrified at the thought of eternal possession, being trapped as a passenger in your own body, you sought ways to rid yourself of his soul forever. As your relationship with Angelica became increasingly intimate, you found the answer to your problems. If you could create a new vessel for Wayne's soul, you were confident you could transfer him into it. All you had to do was get Angelica pregnant.

Two months ago, you gave Angelica the drug that you and Wayne used to see beyond the illusion. The two of you made love in the City of the Dead. Due to the drug, she only remembers the vision of the graveyard and the sex. She doesn't remember you removing the condom, or the rite you performed to transfer Wayne's soul into the seed you had planted within her. In nine months, your mentor would be reborn.

Today, it all went wrong. You had been waiting for Angelica to discover the pregnancy for weeks. Earlier this evening, you were knocked off your feet by a spectral force and you realized that Wayne had reattached himself to you. Wayne was incoherent, in agony. What had gone wrong? A short time later, you got a call. You expected it to be Angelica. Instead, it was Jessica, Angelica's mother, demanding that you come over immediately. Now, everyone is in the kitchen.

Relations

Angelica Caldwell (**+1**) – Your lover. Half of you is just using her, the other half loves her.

Jessica Caldwell (**+1**) – You've always gotten on well with Angelica's mother.

George Caldwell (**+1**) – Angelica's father seems to like you, and you appreciate his art.

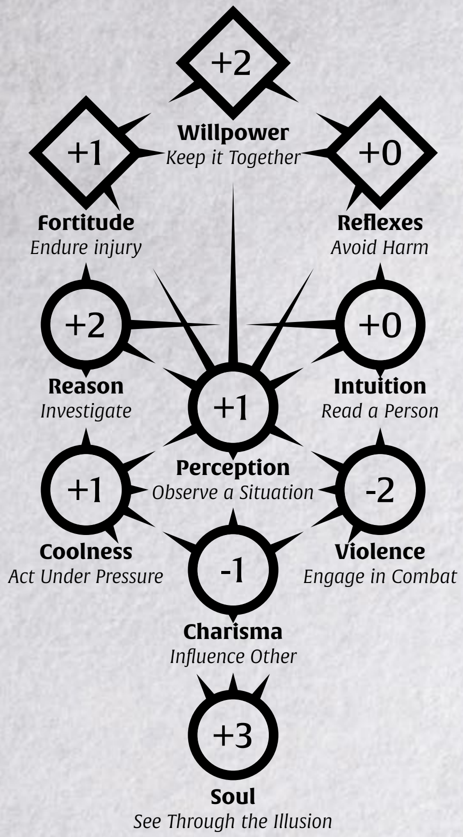
Genesis Caldwell (**+0**) – Angelica's sister. Her faith in the church could be dangerous to you.

Wayne Mynatt (**+2**) – You hope that by avenging his murder he will reveal his secrets to you.

Eve Walker (**+1**) – Wayne's lover and fellow Death Magician. Could she still be alive?

Emma Creed (**+0**) – Mutual friend of Angelica's and yours. She introduced you both.

Attributes


+2
Willpower
Keep it Together
+1
Fortitude
Endure injury
+0
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+2
Reason
Investigate
+0
Intuition
Read a Person
+1
Perception
Observe a Situation
+1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
-2
Violence
Engage in Combat
-1
Charisma
Influence Other
+3
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

☐	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Advantage

Dabbler in the Occult

You know a little of magical rituals, but have never gone beyond performing written instructions. *Whenever you attempt to perform a magical ritual from a set of instructions,* **roll +Soul**:

(15+) You perform every step correctly; the ritual works as intended.

(10–14) You make a minor error. The GM chooses one complication:

- You do not have working protection against the forces or entities the ritual summons.
- The effects of the ritual are slightly different than what you had imagined.
- The ritual summons unexpected entities or forces.

(–9) You misunderstand the scripture and perform the ritual with no control whatsoever over the resulting outcome. The GM makes a Move.

Dark Secret: Occult Experience

Disadvantage

Haunted

You are haunted by supernatural forces. With the GM's assistance, determine the nature of what you believe is haunting you. *In the first session and whenever you are distracted or weakened,* **roll +0** to see if the entity gains power over you:

(15+) The entity leaves you alone.

(10–14) The GM takes 1 Hold.

(–9) The GM takes 3 Hold.

The GM can spend Hold to make a Move for the entity. For example, it requests a service from you and threatens retribution if you refuse, the entity possesses your body for the night, or the entity reveals a clue of what it is and what it wants from you.

JESSICA CALDWELL, POLICE DETECTIVE

⬩ Who You Are

You've lived in Phoenix, Arizona, all your life. You grew up in the downtown area but moved to the North Mountain Village (where you still live today) shortly after marrying your husband, George. You are a detective in the Phoenix Police Department, and George is an artist. You have two children, Genesis and Angelica, who are both currently students at the nearby Arizona State University West Campus. Genesis is studying philosophy and Angelica is studying art.

You now live comfortably on your combined income, but it hasn't always been this way. In the past, George didn't have much success with his art and would often battle with depression. He still has bouts from time to time, but not as often or as bad as they were. Recently, he's landed a large commission with the local Church of Heavenly Unity to decorate their auditorium with a mural, and there's promise of more work to follow.

Your work has been risk-free for some time, but it was not always that way. Ten years ago, you were part of a team that broke up a major drug deal. Things went wrong very fast. Two officers died when the shooting started and you were severely injured. You spent months in the hospital recovering. Since then, you haven't talked about work with your family. You don't want your work to contaminate your family life. Your family means the world to you.

You were declared fit to return to work, signed off by the doctors and the counsellors. However, the pain returns sometimes when getting out of bed or going up and down stairs, causing you to wince. You can count on one hand how many times you've drawn your weapon in the line of duty since then. Thankfully, you've not had to fire it outside of the shooting range. You're not sure how you'd cope in another gunfight, even after ten years.

You've kept yourself busy at work, completing cases and networking, and you have very good prospects for promotion. You have a good reputation as a rational and discerning investigator with a great track record. The higher up the chain you get, the further away from the violence you are, and the happier you will be.

For nearly two years, you have been working on a tough case. It started with what was believed to be an isolated incident. A young lady was admitted to hospital with injuries resulting from an illegal abortion procedure. She nearly died, but recovered and was able to give a description of the female doctor that had performed the procedure. Since then, similar victims of botched procedures have turned up at hospitals across the city, all identifying the same person as being responsible, but none know her name as she refuses to give it.

The rogue doctor appears to set up her clinic in abandoned buildings for very short times and then disappears. Forensics have drawn a blank and there have been no leads from her description, so the case has stalled. Slowly, the number of victims continues to grow and you keep hoping that the next will finally lead you to catching this monster. While her arrest will undoubtedly secure your promotion, that's secondary to your motivation. You sided with the pro-life side of the abortion debate a long time ago.

Outside of work, the family has gone through its ups and downs over the last two years. 18 months ago, Genesis was attacked by two masked men after leaving a party. She was rescued by a man passing by, Pastor Richard Ward, a televangelist who runs the local Church of Heavenly Unity. Neither Genesis nor Richard saw the faces of the two men. With no suspects and no way to identify the two men, there was nothing the police could do. The fact the police were powerless hit you hard. You hate the prospect that the men who nearly killed your daughter are still out there.

Genesis broke up with her long-time boyfriend, Thomas Davis, shortly after the attack. He hadn't walked back with her after the party. The guilt and resentment built up on both sides and they parted. You feel bad for Thomas as he was a good person.

Since then, Genesis has been involved with the church. She has participated in church protests against abortion (a topic that Richard expounds on with a fiery passion), helped out at soup kitchens and even sung in the choir. You are proud of her. Genesis is considered a rising star by Richard. In fact, it was Genesis's connection to the Pastor that led to George getting the commission from the church. It's helped George's self-esteem immensely.

Genesis has tried to get the family more involved in the church, and you've gone along to a few sermons, but not many. While George has embraced the church, you are on the fence. You approve of the Pastor's promotion of pro-life and family values, but your faith isn't as strong as that of Genesis or George. Everything you have seen and experienced in the line of duty has eroded your faith in God. Maybe the church could provide you with that spiritual strength you used to have? You're just not sure.

Angelica has actively rebelled against Genesis's efforts, reading about witchcraft in her presence to antagonize her. It's caused friction between them.

Ten months ago, another student, Tyler Egerton, tried to ask Genesis out on a date. She swiftly refused, wanting to devote herself to the church more than a boyfriend. He seems (or seemed, anyway) like a good person. Angelica made a move on him. They got together and have been dating for about eight months now.

This evening, Angelica came home, staggering. It looked like she'd been using drugs. Concerned, you confronted her, and pushed her till she revealed the truth. She'd just returned from an abortion clinic. You called Tyler, demanding he come over. Now, everyone is in the kitchen.

⬩ Relations

Angelica Caldwell (+**0**) – What went so wrong for her to do this? Could it have been avoided?

Tyler Egerton (+**0**) – Is he the father? Was this planned? Does he even know yet?

George Caldwell (+**2**) – Your loving husband. He's finally getting to explore his talent again.

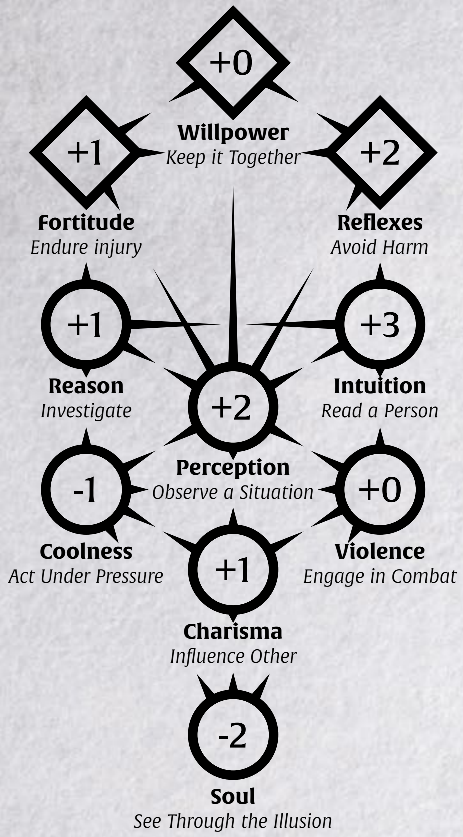
Genesis Caldwell (+**1**) – Your daughter. She has found her faith. Can she help you find yours?

Thomas Davis (+**1**) – The son you never had. You feel so sorry that he and Genesis broke up after her attack.

Emma Creed (+**1**) – Angelica's best friend. She will always look out for your daughter.

Pastor Richard Ward (+**0**) – Charismatic, he's done wonders for Genesis. You like him.

Attributes


+0
Willpower
Keep it Together
+1
Fortitude
Endure injury
+2
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+1
Reason
Investigate
+3
Intuition
Read a Person
+2
Perception
Observe a Situation
-1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+0
Violence
Engage in Combat
+1
Charisma
Influence Other
-2
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

☐	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Advantage

Interrogator

Whenever you ***Read a Person*** *and mention a name, person, or object*, you may always ask “Are you lying?” This doesn’t count towards the number of questions you’re allowed to normally ask.

Dark Secret: Victim of Crime

Disadvantage

Rationalist

You refuse to believe in anything not confirmed as fact by modern science, even when it is right in front of you. In addition to the standard effects, *whenever you* ***See Through the Illusion*** *and whenever the Illusion shatters*, the GM may choose one option:

- Your presence nurtures the Illusion, making it more powerful and impenetrable.
- Your bewildered psyche starts creating mirror images of familiar places and people in the Illusion.
- You attract extradimensional entities.
- You consciously deny what you see, even to your own detriment.

GEORGE CALDWELL, ARTIST

• Who You Are

You've lived in Phoenix, Arizona, all your life. You grew up in the downtown area but moved to the North Mountain Village (where you still live today) shortly after marrying your loving wife, Jessica. You are an artist, and Jessica is a detective in the Phoenix Police Department. Jessica doesn't talk about her work with the family, especially after getting badly injured in the line of duty ten years ago. You respect her privacy, keeping work and home life as separate as possible. Together, you have two children, Genesis and Angelica, that are both currently students at the nearby Arizona State University West Campus. Genesis is studying philosophy and Angelica is studying art – wanting to follow in your footsteps, which makes you proud.

You now live comfortably on your combined income, but it hasn't always been this way. A few years ago, you convinced a downtown gallery to display and sell some of your work. You've always loved fantasy artwork and you were convinced it would appeal to the art world. However, the gallery's most prominent customers complained that your pieces were too dark or fantastic, and that they should be taken down. You were devastated. This was a massive blow to your confidence. You felt your work would never be good enough.

Over the next few months, you slid into a deep depression. You've battled with bouts of depression ever since, but Jessica has always been there for you. She is your rock and what keeps you going. Since then, you've tried painting on-and-off, producing pieces of realism rather than fantasy (local landscapes, cityscapes, wildlife, etc.). A handful of these pieces have sold. Your creative spark hasn't completely died, but for a long time you have felt it dwindle a little more with every passing day.

18 months ago, Genesis was attacked by two masked men after leaving a party. She was rescued by a man passing by, Pastor Richard Ward, a televangelist who runs the local Church of Heavenly Unity. Neither Genesis nor Richard saw the faces of the two men. With no suspects and no way to identify the two men, there was nothing the police could do. The fact the police were powerless hit Jessica hard. Like Jessica, you hate the prospect that the men who nearly killed your daughter are still out there and free. You supported Jessica through this bout of helplessness, just like she supported you through your depression.

Genesis broke up with her long-time boyfriend, Thomas Davis, shortly after the attack. He hadn't walked back with her after the party. The guilt and resentment built up on both sides and they parted. You feel bad for both Thomas and Genesis over what was clearly unfortunate happenstance.

Since then, Genesis has been involved with the church. She has participated in church protests against abortion (a topic that Richard expounds on with a fiery passion), helped out at soup kitchens and even sung in the choir. You are proud of her. Genesis is considered a rising star by Richard. In fact, it was Genesis's connection to the Pastor that led to you getting a commission from the church.

Richard contacted you and said he'd seen some of your landscape pieces. He wanted you to use your ultra-realistic style to paint a large mural depicting Heaven. It would appear on the back of the stage in the megachurch. He offered good money for the work and you accepted. It was just the kind of thing you needed, and the project did wonders for your self-esteem.

It took a few months to complete, but you are very proud of the huge mural. As per Richard's brief, it depicts a sunny sky, fluffy clouds and angels flying through the sky, blowing on trumpets towards the gates of Heaven which are haloed by the sun. It's the first piece of work you have done in a long time that has allowed your true creative flare to shine. Furthermore, it has secured you more work, decorating other parts of the massive auditorium with similar scenes. This has given you a steady income for months, and Richard has already promised that more work will be available after this commission is finished.

Since then, you've shared Genesis's passion for the church that you believe has saved your artistic career. You don't know what life would be like without the church now. During those long hours you've spent painting at the megachurch, you've even made friends with one of the housekeepers, Mike, who is also a friend of Genesis. He's a lonely soul who doesn't appear to have much of a life outside the church. He says he is content, as the church has given him a home and purpose, but you still see tears in his eyes every so often. Something deep inside you makes you very sorry for him so you always take the time to talk to him, share a drink or some snacks, and chat about things.

Genesis has tried to get the family more involved in the church, with mixed results. Jessica has come to some sermons but is still on the fence a little. Her faith has been eroded over the years by her work. Angelica has actively rebelled against Genesis's efforts, reading about witchcraft in her presence to antagonize her. It's caused friction between them.

Ten months ago, another student, Tyler Egerton, tried to ask Genesis out on a date. She swiftly refused, wanting the church more than a boyfriend. He seems like a good person. Angelica made a move on him. They got together and have been dating for about eight months now.

This evening, a row broke out between Angelica and Jessica. Angelica came home late, staggering, and was confronted by Jessica. You were upstairs at the time when the shouting started. Jessica thought Angelica was on drugs and demanded to know what was going on. That's when Angelica shouted that she had just returned from an abortion clinic. Jessica called Tyler, demanding he come over. Now, everyone is in the kitchen.

• Relations

Angelica Caldwell (+**0**) – What went so wrong for her to do this? Could it have been avoided?

Tyler Egerton (+**0**) – Is he the father? Was this planned? Does he even know yet?

Jessica Caldwell (+**2**) – Your loving wife. She's always been there for you. You live for her.

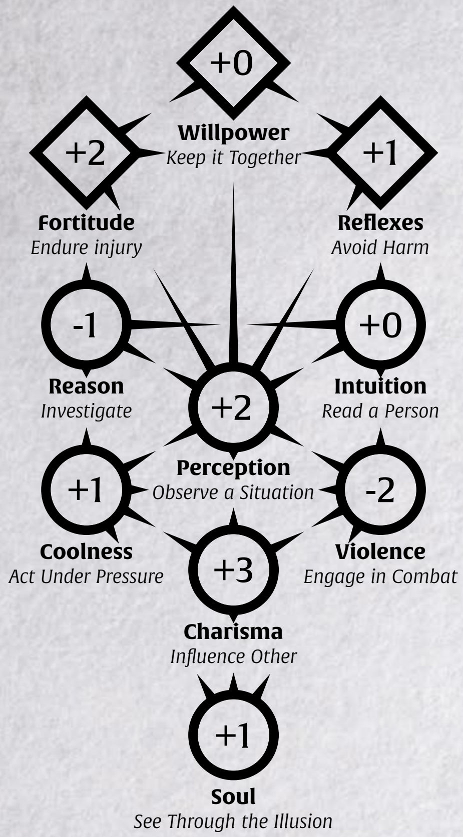
Genesis Caldwell (+**1**) – Your daughter has delighted you with what she has done for the church.

Pastor Richard Ward (+**1**) – He has saved your artistic career. You can't thank him enough.

Mike (+**1**) – The lonely church cleaner. You and Genesis may be the only friends he has.

Thomas Davis (+**0**) – You're so sad about what happened that broke up him and Genesis. He's like a son to you.

Attributes


+0
Willpower
Keep it Together
+2
Fortitude
Endure injury
+1
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
-1
Reason
Investigate
+0
Intuition
Read a Person
+2
Perception
Observe a Situation
+1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
-2
Violence
Engage in Combat
+3
Charisma
Influence Other
+1
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

☐	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	–1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	–1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	–2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	–2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	–3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Advantage

Artistic Talent

Whenever you perform your chosen art form or show your works to an audience, **roll +Charisma** to influence your audience at any time during the scene:

(15+) Choose up to two options any time during the scene.

(10–14) Choose one option any time during the scene.

(–9) Choose one option, but a complication/threat manifests. The GM makes a Move.

Options:

- They want to see more of your art.
- They are affected by the emotion you wanted to convey (e.g., anger, sorrow, fear, joy, lust, etc).
- They look up to you (take *+1 ongoing* with the audience during this scene).
- Their attention is fixed entirely on you throughout your performance.

Dark Secret: Mental Illness

Disadvantage

Depression

You are constantly struggling with depression, which is only worsened by dejection and discouragement. *Whenever facing personal setbacks*, **roll +0**:

(15+) You remain in control.

(10–14) You experience temporary anxiety, decreased self-confidence, or lack of will. You take *–1 to your next roll.*

(–9) You succumb to the sense of hopelessness or blame and punish yourself; reduce **Stability (–2)**. Your lethargy and self-destructive urges do not go away until you numb your depression with medicine, drugs, or alcohol.

GENESIS CALDWELL, STUDENT

• Who You Are

You've lived in Phoenix, Arizona, all your life. You grew up in the North Mountain Village where you still live with your parents, Jessica and George. Jessica is a detective in the Phoenix Police Department (she doesn't talk about her work, especially after getting badly injured in the line of duty ten years ago), and your father is an artist. You have a sister, Angelica. You and Angelica attend the nearby Arizona State University West Campus. Angelica is studying art. You are studying philosophy.

18 months ago, you attended a party at a friend's house with your boyfriend, Thomas Davis, a journalism student. There was plenty of alcohol and drugs being passed around. You didn't object – you just made sure your mother didn't hear about it. You left the party early as the loud music was giving you a headache. Thomas wanted to stay, so you let him.

Only minutes later, two men dressed in black, wearing balaclavas, came out of nowhere. The first punch sent you to the ground. Then, they grabbed hold of you and pulled you into a dark alley. You never saw their faces, but what they said before the seemingly endless barrage of kicks and punches burned its way into your memory forever. "It's nothing personal, not for us," one said before the other stated "one way or another, you just had it coming, bitch." You'll never forget those voices.

Without knowing who they were or why they did it, they very nearly beat you to death. Just as you thought it was too late, a passing man intervened and the two men ran away. You fear what may have happened if he hadn't come to your aid.

While you were recovering in the hospital, the man that saved you (Pastor Richard Ward) came to visit you every day. You got to know him very well, and learned that he was a televangelist who ran the nearby Church of Heavenly Unity. When you were well enough, you went to the church and listened to Pastor Richard give one of his inspiring sermons. You were captivated and have attended the church ever since, having found your faith.

During this time, your relationship with Thomas broke down. You'd been together for a few years, but he was too full of guilt that he hadn't left the party with you that night, and you held a grudge against him for the same reason. You were the one that finally ended the relationship. Sometimes, you think you still have feelings for him, but he keeps a distance from you, even now.

While the wounds have healed on the outside, you still carry the emotional scars of the attack. Neither you or Pastor Richard saw their faces, making identification almost impossible. All you had was those two lines that they spoke. Worried that they might still be out there and that they might come back one day to finish what they started, you purchased a small handgun from one of your friends at the university for self-protection.

You've managed to keep the handgun a secret and no-one else in the family knows about it. Increasingly, over the last few months, you've wondered what you'd do if they came for you again and how you'd make them pay for what they have done. Your rage and desire for revenge has grown increasingly intense and, sometimes, it scares you when you find yourself enjoying the idea of gunning the two men down. Part of you is ashamed to wonder what Pastor Richard would think of you if he found out you harbored such thoughts.

Being a part of the church is one of the best things you have ever done. You've participated in church protests against abortion (a topic that Pastor Richard expounds on with a fiery passion), helped out at soup kitchens and even sung in the choir. Your parents are proud of you. Pastor Richard considers you to be a rising star in the church.

You have tried to bring faith into the home, but have mixed success. A few months ago, you heard that Pastor Richard was looking to commission an artist to paint some murals for the megachurch auditorium. You showed him some of your father's work and that led to George accepting a big commission from the church. It's done wonders for his self-esteem as he has battled with depression for years. He's embraced the church since then. You and he have a mutual friend at the church. Mike, one of the cleaners. He's a lonely soul who doesn't appear to have much of a life outside the church. He says he is content, as the church has given him a home and purpose, but you still see tears in his eyes every so often. Something deep inside you makes you very sorry for him so you always take the time to talk to him, share a drink or some snacks, and chat about things.

Your mother is on the fence. Her ability to have faith has been eroded by the stresses of her work. You can understand that and you know in the end she will turn to the church to renew the faith she once had. Angelica, however, actively resents your efforts, openly reading books on witchcraft to antagonize you. It's driven a wedge between the two of you. You've decided to direct your efforts where they will be used best.

Thankfully, Angelica has had something else to occupy her more recently. One of the medical students at the university, Tyler Egerton, tried to ask you out about ten months ago. You had no interest in him, deciding the church was more important in your life. Two months later, he got together with Angelica and they've been dating ever since.

This evening, a fight broke out between Angelica and Jessica. Angelica came home late, staggering, and was confronted by Jessica. You were upstairs at the time when the shouting started. Jessica thought Angelica was on drugs and demanded to know what was going on. That's when Angelica shouted that she had just returned from an abortion clinic. Jessica called Tyler, demanding he come over. Now, everyone is in the kitchen.

• Relations

Angelica Caldwell (+**0**) – Your sister's refusal to accept God is infuriating. She'll pay one day.

Tyler Egerton (+**0**) – He tried to seduce you. Now he's Angelica's boyfriend. Not interested.

Jessica Caldwell (+**1**) – Your mother is proud of you. Can you help her find her faith?

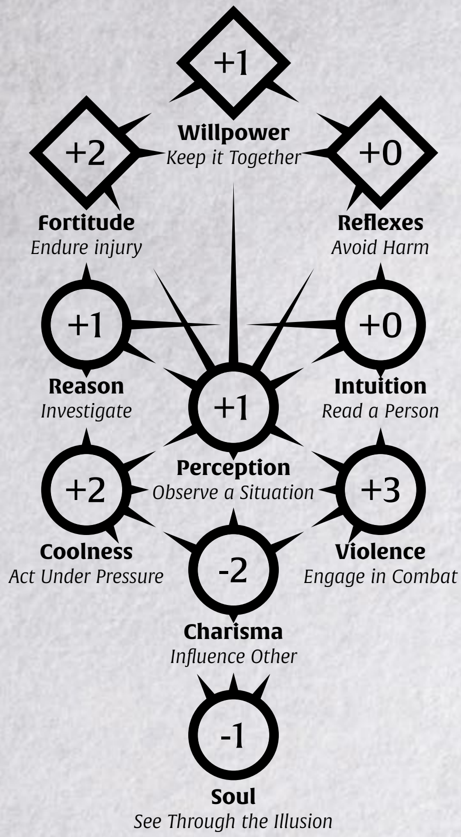
George Caldwell (+**1**) – Your father is such a talented artist, with much to offer the church.

Pastor Richard Ward (+**2**) – The man that has given you purpose. You'd do anything for him.

Mike (+**1**) – The lonely church cleaner. You and George may be the only friends he has.

Thomas Davis (+**0**) – You're not sure if you still have feelings for your ex-boyfriend or not.

Attributes


+1
Willpower
Keep it Together
+2
Fortitude
Endure injury
+0
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+1
Reason
Investigate
+0
Intuition
Read a Person
+1
Perception
Observe a Situation
+2
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+3
Violence
Engage in Combat
-2
Charisma
Influence Other
-1
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

☐	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls +1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Advantage

Death Drive

Whenever you fight with no regard for your personal safety, **roll +Violence**:

(15+) Get 3 Edges. You may spend them any time during the scene.

(10–14) Get 2 Edges. You may spend them any time during the scene.

(–9) Get 1 Edge, but afterwards you discover you have been injured without noticing it (***Endure Injury***; the GM determines the amount of Harm based on who attacked you and how).

Edges:

- *Eager*: **Engage** an additional hostile ***in Combat***.
- *Vicious*: deal **+2 Harm** with one attack.
- *Frantic*: get within reach to attack a hostile.
- *Reckless*: frighten your opponents by laughing into the face of death (*+1 ongoing* during the fight).

Dark Secret: Oath of Revenge

Disadvantage

Oath of Revenge

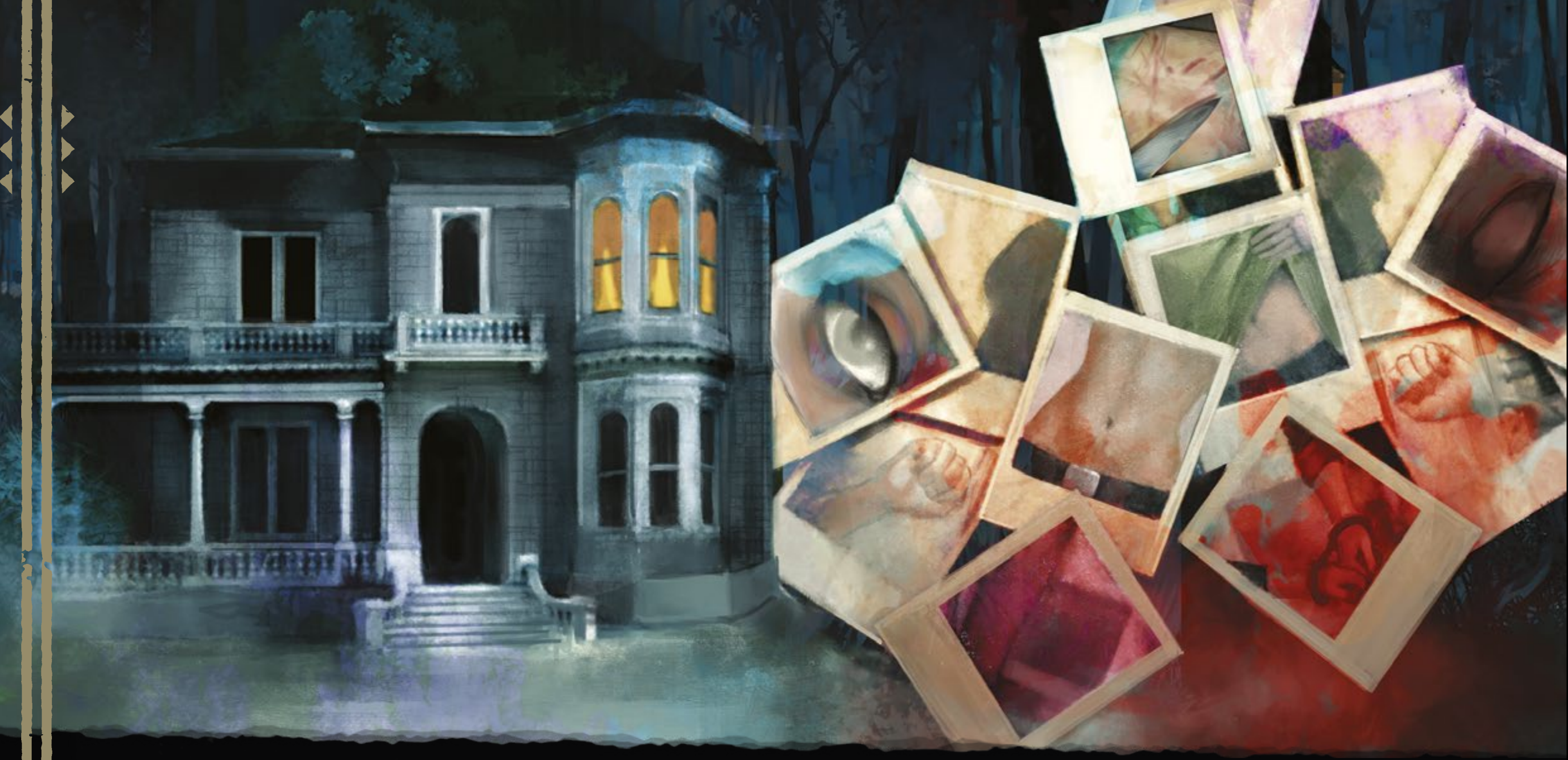
You have sworn to avenge an unforgivable injustice. Your target is your attackers. *Whenever the target of your vengeance (or someone/something associated with them) appears*, **roll +0**:

(15+) You remain in control of your vengeful nature and can act rationally.

(10–14) You can't focus on anything, other than the target of your vengeance. Take *–1 ongoing* until the target's involvement in the scene ends.

(–9) You become obsessed and can act only to further your revenge. Doing anything else requires you roll ***Keep it Together***. Your obsession cannot be assuaged while the target remains in the same scene with you.

JUDGMENT OF THE BLACK MADONNA



HIS LAST HOPE

I STARE INTO THE DYING FIRE. SOON IT WILL GO OUT and the Darkness will come for me. I have nowhere to hide, not any more. I cannot escape it. The terrors of the Darkness await me, and I will pay for my crimes. My victims shall feed upon my flesh and I shall relive their horror and pain.

I hear a window shatter. The agents of the Darkness have found me. Cold and moist voices touch the back of my mind and I hear their heavy footsteps coming through the living room, drawing nearer to my study and to me.

The handle is slowly pushed down, halfway down, but suddenly they let go of it. Have they changed their minds? Have my victims, my sacrifices, already arrived?

My hope will be the last thing to leave me, if it ever will. I still have hope. I still have one last hope.

INTRODUCTION

His Last Hope is a short scenario for ***KULT: Divinity Lost***. The player characters get mixed up in a desperate man's final attempt to escape his eternal punishment. They are pulled into a maelstrom of events where they are forced to confront beings from the other side as well as their own terrors and nightmares.

This scenario is best used as a one-shot and/or an introduction to *KULT*. Text in italics can be read to the players when convenient, but you can also make them a part of your own descriptions of the places and events of the scenario if you wish to do so. Remember that your delivery of this information sets much of the atmosphere, so it is important that you choose the option that best fits your own style of game mastering.

Detailed descriptions of the NPCs and beings that are encountered in this adventure are located at the end of the scenario.

Scenario Themes

Lost Friendship: This is the core of the scenario. The PCs and the doomed Thomas Kristofferson shared a deep friendship in their youth. Will they rebuild it, or are those relationships shattered forever?

Vengeance vs. Forgiveness: When you are betrayed, when life is treating you unfairly, how will you act? Will you forget, forgive, and move on – or will you exact your revenge on the world and those that wronged you?

Note, this scenario is filled with sensitive subjects and touches upon abuse, violence against children, repressed memories, trauma, and past helplessness. Be sure to discuss the *Horror Contract* with the players and establish boundaries so that you are all comfortable entering and leaving this nightmare together.

Background

Thomas Kristofferson is a deeply wounded man. As a child he was placed in a foster home after being abused by his father, but the foster family was no better. Fate laughed at Thomas and only the precious time he spent with his few friends gave him respite from the daily torment.

The boy endured the loathsome situation for a long time, but eventually he could stand it no more. In a desperate attempt to get away from the abuse he fell to his knees and promised his soul to anyone who would listen in exchange for the power to exact his revenge.

Kristofferson's prayers were filled with a desperation so powerful that they captured the attention of a servant of the Death Angel Samael. In a dream, the being revealed itself to the boy and promised that he would have his revenge if only he could wait for three nights. Scared and hopeful at the same time, Thomas promised to wait for Samael's gifts.

A few nights after the boy's desperate plea, a group of Jackals bound to the will of Samael reached Thomas's foster home. Thomas's memories are fuzzy, but he remembers that the Jackals invaded the house and managed to force or convince him that he should partake in the grisly deed of ritually slaughtering his foster family. Half-unwillingly and half-willingly, the terrified little boy was drawn into Samael's net. Armed with various kitchen implements, the boy and the Jackals destroyed his abusers. When Thomas saw the results of his prayer, he fled the bloody house and disappeared into the night, followed and later captured by the sinister Jackals of Samael.

They kept Thomas captive for several years, acting out the massacre again and again in different homes and in different countries. Finally the boy snapped and slew his hated captors, cutting their throats in their sleep. This greatly amused the servant of Samael, for he now knew that he had within reach a soul recked with so much internal conflict and agony that its suffering would be legendary, even in Inferno. Thomas had been groomed to become a source of power that could fuel Samael's principle of Vengeance.

Thomas fled society with incurable emotional scars on his soul. He found an illusory safety among the social outcasts, who did not hesitate to take advantage of the vulnerable youngster. Defenseless and thirsting for love, he became an easy prey for unscrupulous men and women that used him for their own ends and amusements. This drama was repeated time after time, and Thomas was forced to continue his flight. Reality and dreams mixed together and he was no longer able to tell the truth from the lies.

Then Thomas was visited with visions from Samael, promising him his own purgatory for the sins he had committed. Due to his enormous and growing burden of guilt, Thomas had invoked a nepharite of Samael's. The Gatherer.

The nepharite gave the boy a lifeline: if he found others to take his place in the purgatory, he would be spared for as long as his sacrifices entertained their tormentors. Only if he found

EARLIER INCARNATIONS OF HIS LAST HOPE

His Last Hope was originally written for the second edition of *KULT*. It was first published in the Swedish second edition rulebook and then later in issue 43 of *White Wolf Magazine*. The story had something that appealed to horror gamers across the globe and it became a fan favourite and even inspired fan-created sequels.

The goal when writing the original version was to create a very short scenario that showcased the setting without giving too much of the rich background away. Thus the original text presented a scenario that was self-contained and could be used with any kind of player character. It opened a window into the horrors behind the veil and introduced the nepharites and the concept of the purgatories, and then slammed that window shut.

The themes that were carried through to the final text were heavily influenced by the horror movies and comics that were popular during the nineties, but due to factors beyond our control we had to tone down some of the visceral horror in the final version. When revising *His Last Hope* for the current version of *KULT*, I received instructions to revisit these themes, so in a sense this version of the scenario is closer to the original concept than the original version all those years ago.

someone who truly deserved to take his place in the purgatory, however, could he escape forever.

The boy became a man and his thoughts dwelt constantly on the crimes he committed, imagined or not. The lines between his own life and the media he consumed blurred. His burden of guilt was becoming heavier and heavier, and soon the normal sacrifices were not enough to sate the nepharites' thirst. Now it was time to collect him. The Gatherer found Thomas and drew him into the Purgatory he had created for him. There his foster parents waited to continue their abuse, alongside his father and the Jackals.

But Thomas used all his powers to keep the servants of Samael away. Even so, they hunted him across an endless labyrinth and within him his pain and anger and thirst for vengeance grew as well as his desperation. Who deserved to take his place? What more could he sacrifice? His memories turned towards his childhood friends. They knew. They knew what was going on and they did nothing to stop it. This final shard of his humanity, if he sacrificed it, if he let his vengeance consume this as well – then perhaps he finally can be free?

So this is where it all begins for the player characters. Thomas reaches out to his former friends from before his soul sank into violent and terrified helplessness. Maybe he can trade their souls for his. Or perhaps they can do as they promised back then – stand up for each other and help him.

One last hope.

General setting

His Last Hope takes place anywhere in the modern world the GM feels is appropriate. Given the themes and the plot, there should be nothing in the adventure that makes any one country more or less appropriate for running this adventure. All places and events described are fictional and there is nothing to prevent the GMs from changing the locations, names, years or any other details to fit the players.

The adventure is meant as a frame for the events that take place, and it is, as always, up to you as the GM how to use the information given in this scenario. For example, the defining location of His Last Hope is a large isolated house that has been neglected for some time. This might seem to exclude inner city locales, but an inventive GM could make it work in such a setting as well.

The Player Characters

This scenario includes four premade player characters. You will get the most out of the scenario with four players.

The players take the roles of four friends who have known each other since they were very young. They grew up together with Thomas Kristofferson. The friendship they built in their little gang of misfits was their only escape from constant bullying and terror from their cruel contemporaries. But that was then, and now in their adult life they have drifted apart and hardly have any contact with each other. That all changes as the friends become entangled in Kristofferson's plot to escape eternal damnation. Give the instruction and the descriptions below to the players. Let them choose one of the friends to play.

"You were all former childhood friends but you haven't met in at least 15 years. There are four characters to choose from."

- ***Gabrielle**: 32 years old. Studio musician and sound technician. Part of the goth subculture. Had a rough life in the big city and now lives alone.*
- ***Michael**: 32 years old. Private Security Guard. Fit, but has a strong temper that often gets him in trouble. Does not back down from a fight.*
- ***Ralph**: 32 years old. Consulting computer programmer. Is invested in conspiracy theories, nerd culture and lives most of his life online.*
- ***Ursula**: 32 years old. Part time laborer that is good with her hands. Tends to clash with people and has a hard time keeping both jobs and relationships.*

Repressed Memories

The Players might be interested in what they remember about Thomas before the flashbacks take place. For example, when first meeting at a café, they might Google his name or things like that. Tell them that they don't remember that much, that what they recollect is very hazy. When they search for information they don't find anything about him. The Illusion has tried to erase all traces of Thomas, but when he comes back into their lives a letter from him triggers their memories, and the Truth starts to shine through.

Any stability losses during the flashbacks remains in the present age since the repressed memories have come to the surface with full force.

Flashbacks

The events of His Last Hope will move between the current day, where the gang is reunited as they are drawn back to the haunting grounds of their younger selves: the old manor house known as The Crow's Nest, and the days or weeks before Thomas's disappearance. To do so, the scenario makes use of flashbacks where the players control their younger selves.

How the players roleplay these flashbacks might influence the resolution of the scenario. If the flashbacks reveal that they were true friends of Kristofferson, they might escape. If the players choose to play the flashbacks to their full dramatic potential, one or more of them might very well take Kristofferson's place in the Gatherer's purgatory.

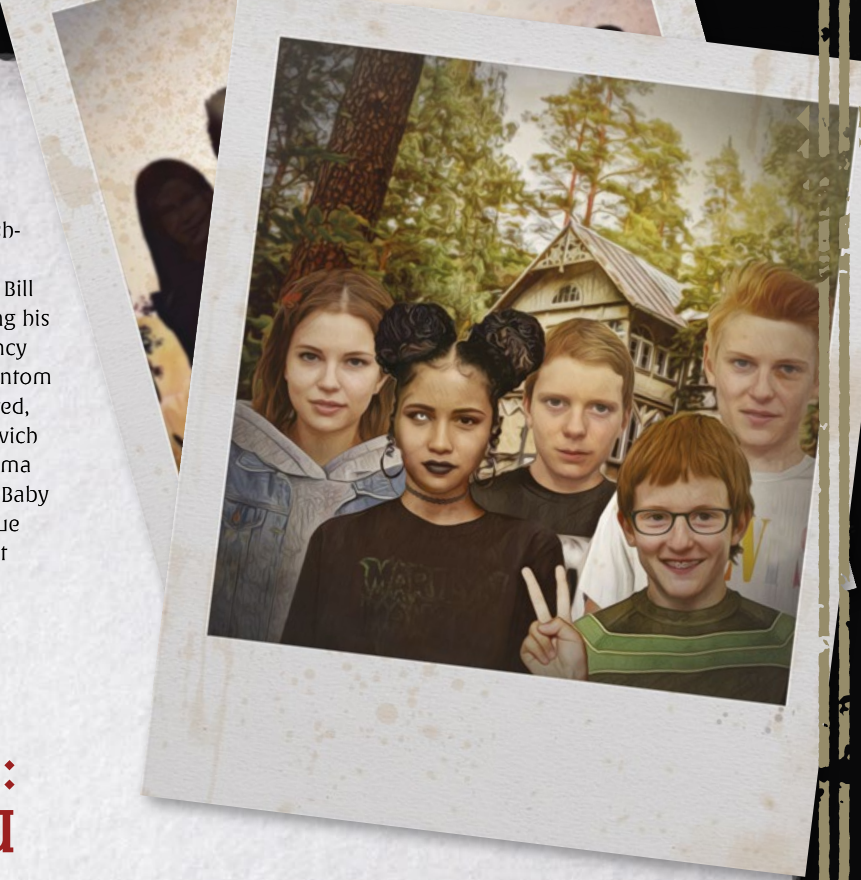
There is only one hard extra rule to the flashbacks: the players and/or the GM may not choose to pursue an option that would kill or maim any of the young players' characters physically on a permanent basis. If they try to do it, give the players narrative control and ask them "We know this character is still alive, so what is it that makes you fail or hesitate?"

In addition to this, the players will be given pointers on what directions they can take their characters. This should provide plenty of role playing potential and opportunity for the GM to shape the adventure according to the actions of the players. In short, the player characters that are sympathetic to Thomas and offer him true friendship have a good chance of making it out alive, while those that take advantage of his vulnerability risk taking his place in his purgatory.

Playing Like It's 1999

The adult scenes in His Last Hope take place in 2019. The flashbacks throw the players back to 1999, where Y2K dominated the tech press, Napster was a new thing, American president Bill Clinton avoided being impeached by the Senate after coercing his intern Monica Lewinsky into sexual acts, and the Euro currency made its debut. On the silver screen, movies such as The Phantom Menace, The Matrix, The Sixth Sense and Toy Story 2 dominated, together with cult favorites like Fight Club, Being John Malkovich and The Iron Giant. On the television, Family Guy and Futurama showed up and Millennium ended. The biggest singles were Baby One More Time (Britney Spears), Mambo No. 5 (Lou Bega), Blue (Eiffel 65), No Scrubs (TLC) and I Want it That Way (Backstreet Boys).

This and much more formed the backdrop to the end of a millennium.



THE ANGELS: THEN AND NOW

Thomas and his friends called themselves the Angels. The other kids called them the Freaks.

They were a closely knit group, brought and held together by their individual status as outcasts and freaks. This sense of being outside the rest of society was the glue that kept the group together, more than any common ground when it came to interests or hobbies.

Gabrielle – the Goth

A freedom-loving rebel, Gabrielle embraced the goth subculture as soon as she learned of its existence. She still wears almost all black with silver or white statement pieces. In the small town where she grew up, she was a unique character, publicly ridiculed and secretly admired in equal measures.

Gabrielle immersed herself in the popular music of the Goth subculture: Bauhaus, The Cure, Joy Division, Sisters of Mercy and Siouxsie and the Banshees. She even learned to play the guitar and took singing lessons in the hope of forming a band. However, none of the "respectable" kids in her small town wanted anything to do with her. Only after leaving her home town did she managed to earn a living as a studio musician and sound technician.

When Gabrielle left for the big city, she soon found new friends, and had no qualms about leaving her old friends behind. She adored her new friends without limits, and as a consequence burned her candle at both ends. Drugs and alcohol took over her life and she lost who she was for a time. Now she has broken free (again) and left those wild days behind.

Gabrielle is a survivor, and hates loud and arrogant people who selfishly put their needs above others'. She reacts badly to any attempt to question her boundaries or take away her personal freedom.

Dark secret: During her wild days in the big city, Gabrielle ended up in a relationship with Jerod Warner, a famous artist and figurehead within the Goth Subculture. It soon became destructive as Jerod controlled her through both emotional and physical abuse. He chose how she dressed, what friends she had, and where she was allowed to go. Under Jerod's abuse, Gabrielle did a lot of things she regrets. She even tattooed his name on her arm. Tragically, she blames herself for not being strong enough to leave him – he dumped her. This period of her life makes her sick of her own weakness and how blind she was. She later removed the tattoo.

Michael – the Troublemaker

Getting himself into trouble pretty much defined Michael's character. He was always stronger than he was smart, and known for making rash decisions, then fighting his way out of the consequences. This behavior masked his insecurities and created the need to assert his power over the other kids in the gang.

As a young boy, his interests turned towards fighting and the military and he obsessed over WWII and the generals on both sides.

As an adult, Michael started military service, but was discharged due to his violent mood swings. He tried to become a police officer but again his temperament tripped him up and he failed during the application process. In the end, he found his calling as a private security guard, putting all his efforts into protecting businesses from loiterers and shoplifters.

Michael's defining traits are insecurity, a short temper, and a tendency to lash out when he feels he's losing control.

Dark Secret: Michael finds an outlet for his inner frustration by participating in underground fighting events. These are violent affairs and have on at least two occasions led to his opponents getting serious injuries, something that has filled Michael with shameful joy.

Ralph – the Geek

The classic nerdy boy, Ralph was a thin and gangly kid, sporting large glasses and oversized clothes. A quick thinker and keen reader, he was constantly bullied by the other kids around him. He nurtured a slow, burning hatred towards his bullies and felt resentment towards popular and successful kids, who he deemed unworthy of their elevated status.

To escape the torment of his detractors, Ralph turned inwards and became an extremely introverted adolescent. When he wasn't studying, he spent most of his time reading books, watching movies, and playing games. His knowledge of fantasy worlds and superhero comics was unrivaled in the gang's home town.

When he grew up, he became a hacker and a programmer, building his own computers and creating his own applications. As the Internet grew into prominence, he lived more and more online. Soon he lost himself in the worlds of Usenet and later 4chan and 8chan, eagerly diving into the world of conspiracy theorists and political extremists.

Ralph is an introvert who feels most at home in front of a monitor or a good book. He is obsessed with finding narrative patterns in his life and is quickly frustrated when things don't conform to his world view.

Dark secret: Ralph uses his knowledge and skills to gather information about the other player characters and the kids that bullied him when he was young. He knows the Dark Secrets of the other player characters and is especially fascinated with Gabrielle – he's gathered a lot of pictures of her from her wild party days in the city. Occasionally, he'll pull them up on his phone and just stare.

So far he hasn't used this information to do anything to his friends, but he makes a nice side income by blackmailing those far more successful than him.

Gather forth, brave adventurers!

It was so many years ago that the Angels roamed the woods behind our
school. Even though we have drifted apart over the years I implore you
meet me at the Underground Cafe on Saturday at seven thirty.
you to take up arms with me and slay the dragon that
Nest!

Ursula – the Freak

Ursula came to her childhood small town together with her father, who married a local woman and found a job at the factory. She never fit in and her difficulties with learning the language didn't help much. She was an outcast and relentlessly bullied by the "normal" kids. Sometimes she would just wait it out, but occasionally she would erupt into fits of violence.

To cope with her miserable life, Ursula cultivated the persona of the outcast, flying her freak colors proudly. She would change the color of her hair several times a month, she would dress up in the most outrageous outfits, she would do everything she could to provoke those around her to have some measure of independence. If she couldn't control her life, then no one would control her.

Adult life has been equally difficult for Ursula, and she has had problems finding and keeping jobs, always clashing with bosses or colleagues. She is an accomplished welder and has a natural affinity for repairing things, so most often she will find odd jobs at the dockyards or warehouses in the city where she lives.

Dark secret: Ursula has a trauma-induced mood disorder that leads to her acting out if she feels abandoned or threatened. She is medicated and occasionally sees a therapist who charges her on a sliding scale. Without a sense of stability (i.e. a routine and taking her medication) and community, she will quickly begin to suffer from mood swings, severe anxiety, and violent impulsivity.

FIRST CONTACT

The scenario starts when the player characters each receive an ordinary letter with no stamp or return address. The short message isn't signed and is written on a typewriter with a strange, old-looking typeface.

The letter you are holding in your hand simply reads:

"Gather forth, brave adventurers! It was so many years ago that the Angels roamed the woods behind our school. Even though we have drifted apart over the years, I implore you to meet me at the Underground Café on Saturday at seven thirty. I need you to take up arms with me and slay the dragon that dwells in The Crow's Nest!"

The GM then reads:

A rush of memories flood your mind. The Angels. Your old gang, the gang that the other kids called the Freaks. You were a closely-knit group, brought and held together by your statuses as outcasts and freaks. There are only four of you left now; Michael, Ursula, Ralph and Gabrielle. You have no idea which of the others sent this letter, but you remember your childhood summers, the Dungeons & Dragons games in the basement, the abandoned house that you called The Crow's Nest and the things you experienced there.

Every member of the gang will probably assume that one of the others sent the message, but as they meet up, they will realize that there is something else behind this.

The Underground Café

It is Saturday evening. The skies are dark and rain sweeps through the city. It's not a friendly, warm rain, but one that chills anyone outside to the bone. The café is in the basement of a reclaimed industrial building. A rusty iron staircase leads down into the darkness. The pale glow from the café's neon sign is the only light visible. The door opens inwards, and a small bell jingles.

Decide as a group which player character arrives first, then let them appear one by one and greet each other. It's been more than a decade since they last met. Ask them questions such as: "How have you changed since the others last saw you?" and "How do the others recognize you?". Try to tie the past and the present together.

After a short while, the four player characters have gathered in the Underground Café. They are the only guests. No one else is present besides the older woman behind the counter.

Give the players the opportunity to role play an awkward reunion of friends who no longer even remember why they were friends, but who still feel that their secrets bind them together.

After some time catching up, the player characters will realize that none of them sent the message that brought them to this place. At this point, the door opens and into the café comes a man, dressed in rags and soaked in rain. An earthy smell fills the room. The newcomer looks like a homeless man, but there is something wild and animalistic in his eyes. He moves over to the table and pulls out a plastic bag from his pocket, which contains a crumpled letter. He throws it on the table, then turns and walks away.

This is a Jackal that is deeply loyal to Thomas. If stopped and asked, he only says that a man named Thomas told him to deliver this. He can also admit that he delivered the letter to their respective addresses on the man's orders. That's all he will say.

If followed, he will go to a place beneath a bridge where he has a temporary home. If attacked, he will pull a knife and stab his attacker, then run away.

When the characters read the letter, they find the following written in the same typeface as the other letters and on the same kind of paper:

"We Angels swore to always be together and stand up for each other. I was always there for you whenever you needed me. Protected you from bullies, helped you with your homework, drew art for the games we played. But did you help me? Did you care? No, you let me tag along but you never were there for me. No one was. You left me to deal with all the horrors myself. Well, I can't go on alone any longer. Now is the time when I need your help. So I call on you, my friends, my Angels, meet me at The Crow's Nest tonight. I have become the sad soul in need of a brave band of adventurers to save me. So please... save me!"

- Thomas

In the envelope there is also a Polaroid photo of the player characters and Thomas from when they were young.

This immediately triggers the first flashback.

THE DAY IT HAPPENED

First flashback

This is the first of the three flashbacks that clarifies the relationships between the player characters, as well as their relationship with Thomas Kristofferson. Let the players take some time to think about how they want to play their younger selves.

After this, proceed to the flashback itself.

It's summer. There are five members of the Angels; Michael, Ursula, Ralph, Gabrielle and Thomas. You are twelve years old and you have reached the end of the summer vacation. The summer has been warm and good. The Angels have been on many adventures and not gotten into too much trouble... with some exceptions, of course.

Ask the players what happened when their tormentors caught them, and what they did to the group. You play the part of Thomas Kristofferson and help the players include him in their descriptions.

Thomas should be somewhat of a mystery to the players, as this is their first introduction to him. The players might have questions about him, but the GM should keep the information given to a minimum at the moment; he is a friend, he lives with a foster family, he is not treated very well and he has run away from home on several occasions.

If the players ask why they won't get more information, feel free to explain that they will learn more during the flashbacks that will take place during the scenario.

A MISSING ANGEL

The flashback takes place the day after Thomas's disappearance. He has not turned up at the lake where the Angels have met up every morning of the summer. So where could he be? Maybe he's sick? Or has he run away again?

The gang will probably go to their friend's house to look for him.

Thomas lives with his foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. Donner. They're an older couple, very religious and respected in your small community. They have a big house but Thomas has never invited you inside. In fact, he tries to stay away from home as much as possible. He hates his foster parents, and you can sort of understand why; something about them makes your skin crawl.

This time when you arrive, you immediately realize that something is terribly wrong. A police car is outside and a police officer is vomiting just outside the front door. Another officer is desperately using the intercom in the cruiser to call for reinforcement. What do you do?

The characters need to figure out what's going on somehow. They might try to sneak into the house or talk to the police, but if the players have other ideas, it is up to them and the GM to figure out how successful they are.

TALKING TO THE POLICE

If the player characters talk to the police, they will be shooed away. The only thing the cops say is that the house is a crime scene and the public is not allowed inside. They won't engage the player characters in any other way.

It's possible for the player characters to find out more from the police by just hanging around the house, eavesdropping on the police, and generally observing the situation.

WAITING AND OBSERVING

Observing the house and the police as they work at the crime scene, can yield a few clues. If the player characters manage to somehow get a closer look at the entrance to the house, they will see that the floor of the hall is covered in blood. They also see that every officer that emerges from the house is visibly shaken, and that their forensic booties are bloodied and dark.

After a while, the local police officers are replaced by experts sent from the central police organization. The house is properly cordoned off and they set up screens that shield their work from prying eyes. Not much more can be learned.

A short while after the player characters show up, eager journalists start swarming the place along with spectators from the neighborhood.

If the player characters engage with the press, they might learn a few things, but only if they themselves contribute what they know about the house and its inhabitants. In exchange for their stories, the player characters learn that four people have been violently murdered and a fifth is missing. For now, the journalists don't know who is dead and who is missing.

There is no known motive for the grisly deed but the police suspect that a cult or serial killer is involved.

SNEAKING INTO THE HOUSE

It's possible, especially when there are only two cops on scene, to sneak into the house. The player characters may use the basement entrance, sneak in through an open window or perhaps even the back door. If they manage to avoid the police, they will find that Kristofferson's foster parents have been killed and dismembered in the living room. Their heads have been placed on the mantelpiece.

The floors of this room, the kitchen, and the hall are covered with blood. The foster parents' son and daughter have been killed in their beds, with no signs of struggle. In Thomas's room there are signs of a struggle, but they find no trace of him anywhere in the house.

Bloody hammers, pliers, knives and saws are scattered around the house, most of them in the living room.

If the police discover the player characters in the house, they take them outside and threaten them with charges of trespassing and interfering with a felony investigation, while at the same time asking if they know who could have done this to the Donner family. After some time, the PCs are picked up by their parents.

ENDING THE FLASHBACK

After the player characters have done what they can to get information on what happened to Thomas and his foster family, the flashback ends.

You didn't learn much about what happened in the house that night. You watched the news and learned that a small group of people entered the house, killing the family and abducting your friend Thomas.

The police looked for him for months, but finally the search was called off. He was never found and was presumed dead.

POLICE LINE DO NOT CR

LEAVING FOR THE CROW'S NEST

As the first flashback ends, return to The Underground Café. The player characters are left with a choice. Should they heed the call of the person claiming to be their old friend or should they ignore his summons?

It is presumed that the player characters choose to leave for The Crow's Nest. This is an old house they used to play in when they were young. They were never sure if the house was truly deserted or if someone squatted there, but they were never discovered during their expeditions.

To get to The Crow's Nest, the player characters must take a car or a taxi. Michael has taken his own car to The Underground Café, so that is the most obvious choice of transport, but it's up to the players to decide for themselves how they get there.

They all know the way to the house; it's on the outskirts of town and quite isolated. It will take about 45 minutes to drive there.

Road Kill

The road leading to The Crow's Nest is a narrow dirt road that makes its way through a dense and dark forest. As the player characters follow the road towards the house, a thick fog descends on the forest and the characters must drive slowly to be able to follow the road.

The fog is very thick, and the humid, heavy air makes it necessary to keep the wipers constantly going. Soon the fog has gotten so thick that the sides of the road are no longer visible. The forest beyond is only glimpsed as a dark and menacing shape. Suddenly a shadow runs out in front of the characters' car.

You hear a piercing sound, a desperate and anguished cry. A shadow throws itself against the windshield. Thick veils of fog are ripped to shreds and you see a deformed being press its white face against the glass. Its eyes are wide open, the face is crisscrossed by open wounds and blood runs out of its mouth and nostrils.

Then the being is torn away from the windshield and they catch a glimpse of the misshapen shadow as it disappears on all fours into the fog. After this, all is quiet.

The windshield is covered with blood and pus and the player characters must **Keep it Together**.

A player character that succeeded in Keeping it Together realizes that it was the distorted face of Thomas's foster father who was brutally murdered in 1999, the same night that their friend disappeared.

To be able to continue their travel, the characters must leave the interior of the car and clean the windscreen with some kind of cloth. If the player character's chose to take a taxi to reach The Crow's Nest, the driver freaks out and refuses to speak to the characters for the rest of the drive, demanding hazard pay when they reach their destination and driving off immediately.

While the characters tend to the windshield, they hear rustling sounds from the forest around them. Those outside the car also find footprints of a man scrabbling on hands and knees leading out into the forest. They can also hear the whine of an injured dog, as well as a mad giggle.

Regardless of the way the characters now choose to proceed, they will end up at The Crow's Nest. The Illusion surrounding Thomas and the house have started to crack, and the player characters will find it impossible to do anything else. No matter how they try to get back to town, they will ultimately stand in front of the house.

All the time, the rain-laden fog hangs thick over the landscape.

Arriving at The Crow's Nest

Suddenly, the fog clears up and the player characters reach a red two-story house. Kristofferson's car is parked in front of the house, and its trunk is open. All is quiet.

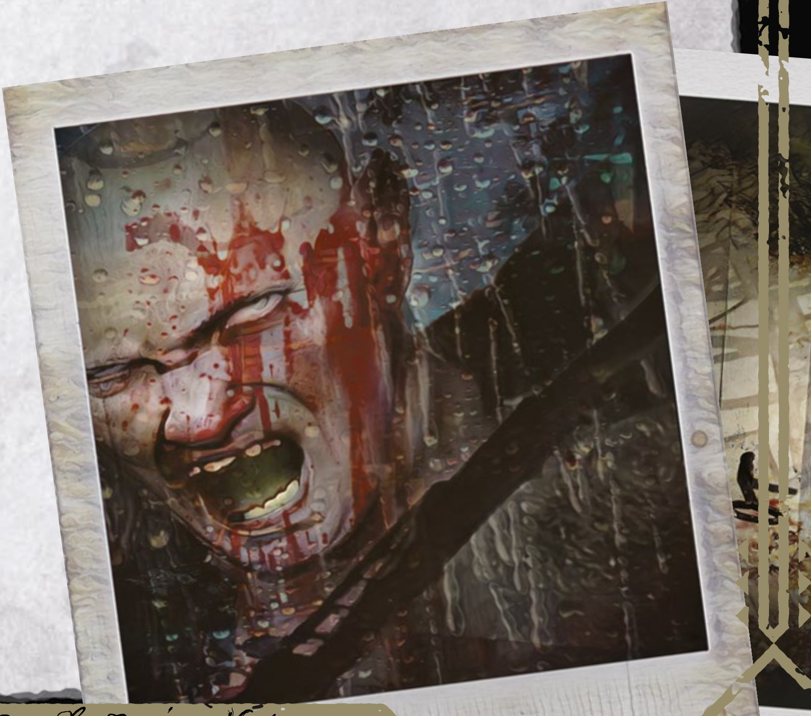
The house towers like a clumsy beast in the fog. The thick clouds drift aside and you find yourselves in front of a soundly built two-story house. This is the Crow's Nest, where you took part in many imaginary adventures and expeditions.

A cold light shines from the hall and out of a window on the second floor. A thin veil of smoke struggles toward the dark and rain-laden sky, rising from one of the two chimneys. A small car is parked by the stairs to the front door, but there is no sign of the house's occupant. The dirt road leads on to a small building by the house, presumably a barn or a garage.

The house has two stories and a cellar. A window on the second floor is lit up by a kerosene lantern, but apart from that, the lamp in the hall is the only source of light. By the house is a small barn that seems to be used as a garage.

Besides trampled down grass, there are no signs of Kristofferson. He will not answer if the characters call him. There is nothing else to do but enter the house. Wooden stairs lead to the veranda on the front and a set of stairs to the right of the house leads down to the cellar. Nobody will answer or open the door if the characters knock, and if they try the front door they will find that it is locked and barred. The cellar door is also locked.

This leads to the second flashback.



EXPLORING THE HOUSE

Second Flashback

The second flashback takes place during the summer of 1999, some time before the events of the first flashback.

The Angels are standing at the back of The Crow's Nest. All five of you are there. It is summer, sometime before the disappearance of your friend Thomas. You have hidden your bikes among the trees surrounding the house and are eager to start your exploration.

You've heard there's a freaky room in the house full of stuffed animals and shrunken human heads. You just have to see this!

You aren't sure if there is someone living in the house now. Someone told you that the owner is living somewhere abroad. But then again, someone else told you the house is haunted ...

The entire gang is present; the four player characters and Thomas Kristofferson. This is the first time they are able to directly interact with the mysterious boy so make the most of their first encounter. Focus on conveying the following traits:

- Assertive
- Destructive
- Imaginative
- Tormented

The actions taken by the player characters in this flashback will influence how Thomas views them at the end of the adventure, as well as the final outcome. The GM should have Thomas act out, seeking friendship and testing the characters' loyalties, and see how they respond.

There are four scenes in this flashback. You should familiarize yourself with the overall layout of the house but the gang won't explore the house in detail during this flashback.

The house is presently unoccupied but, as future events will show, the Illusion around as well as inside the house is weak. This means that the player characters will experience both audible and visible premonitions of the events that will take place about twenty years later. Use this to create the feeling that there is someone in the house during this expedition, and also to underline the horrific atmosphere that permeates the building. The shadows might briefly come to life, a reflection in a mirror might show much an older player character, screams might be heard in the distance. Make use of all your GMing tools to create an environment that the player characters find eerie, even horrific, but don't push this so hard that the player characters leave the house too soon. Also, don't just focus on Thomas. Give the players time to portray their characters.

THINGS TO SPICE UP THE FLASHBACK

Here are suggestions of things that you as a GM can use to make the house creepier.

- One of the characters finds $100 in 20 dollar bills inside a book. Do they take it? Share it with the others?
- The gang finds an old Polaroid Camera. Thomas looks pale, especially if he hears the sound of it, and if he gets hold of it, he will throw it to the floor and try to destroy it.
- One of the characters sees Thomas standing by a window, looking out, tears in his eyes. He won't respond if he's asked what's wrong. He might even lash out in anger if a player character continues to ask him questions.
- A vase falls to the ground with a loud crash.
- There is a smell of rot. In the corner, a dead mouse rots in a trap. Maggots crawl through its small body.
- On a desk in an old and shabby room is an Adler Typewriter (1938 model Favorite 2) with an old looking Fraktur Typeface. There is a crisp white paper inserted and the typewriter works perfectly.

SCENE 1 – ENTERING THE HOUSE

As the gang is standing outside, Thomas starts goading one of the player characters to break into the house. He chooses the member who is the most visibly nervous about being at the house, or a member of the Angels who is scared of him. He will take any opportunity to belittle his friend. It is obvious that he's upset about something, but he won't share any details about whatever it is.

Let the players exercise their creativity when breaking into the house. The easiest way is through an unlocked coal chute leading into the cellar, but it's also possible to just break a window or jimmy a door open. Remember to make it ambiguous whether or not someone else is in the house.

SCENE 2 – "ARE YOU MY FRIEND?"

After the Angels have entered the premises, they sneak around a bit, exploring the house. Thomas falls behind, making sure that only one other player character is with him. If at all possible, choose the one Thomas cares the most about.

When they are alone, he shuts the door to the room they're in, trapping the player character in the room with him.

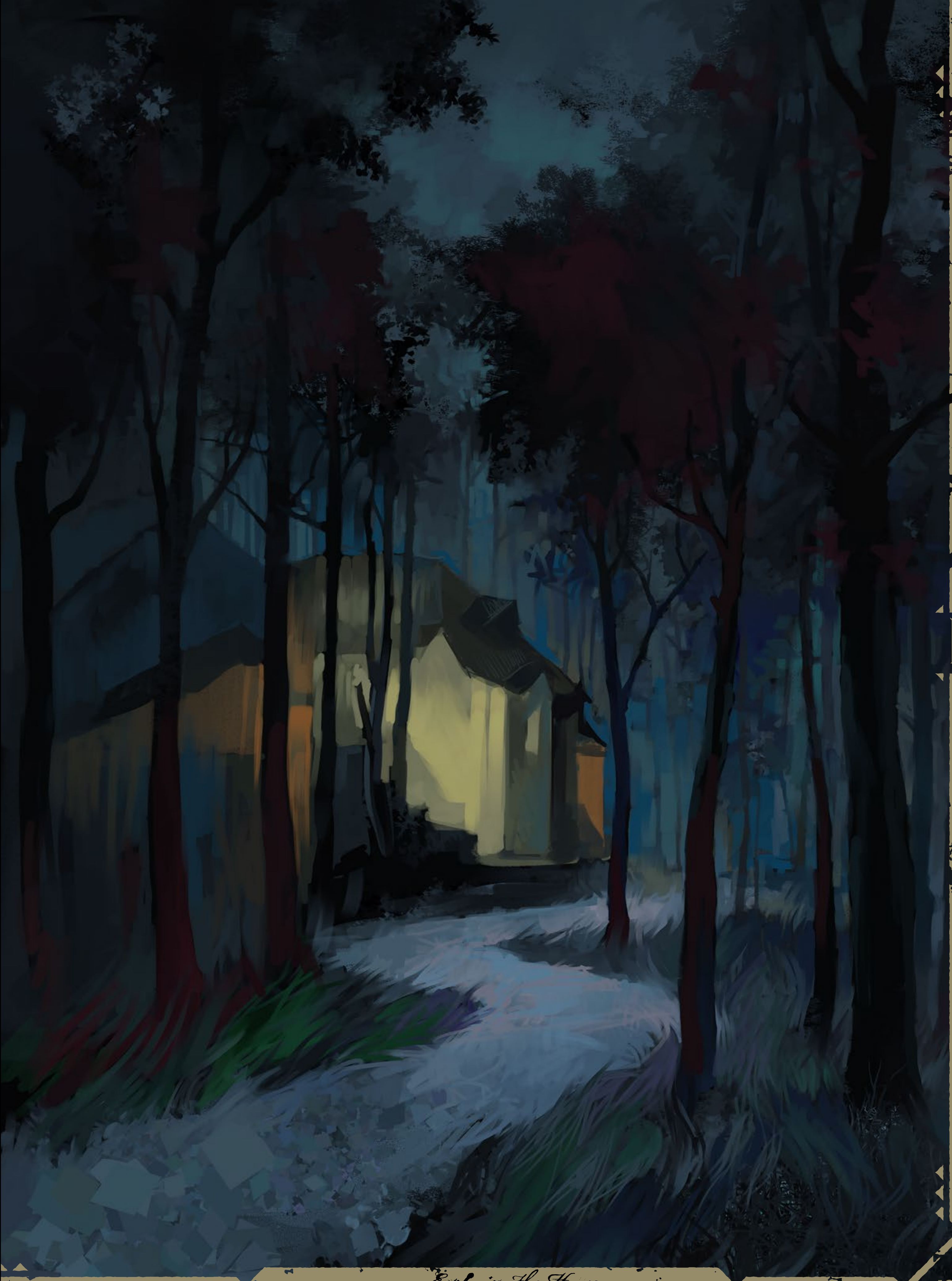
He leans against the door, looking intensely at his friend. Then he speaks.

"You know, I never know who's my friend and who's not! Are you my friend? Are the others my friends? Tell me the truth!"

After the PC answers him, he continues:

I hate living here. I hate not being with my mother. Sometimes I hate all of you. Sometimes you're all that keeps me alive. Fuck this. I can't take this shit anymore! How do you keep from going insane? Why can't life just be normal for once?

Thomas will listen intently to the player character's answers to his questions. If asked, he will reveal that his foster parents are beating him. He lifts up his shirt, showing the bruises all over his back, as well as some nasty scars. He will not answer any other questions. If it becomes too personal or "mushy", his eyes tear up and he yanks the door open, abruptly demanding that they catch up with the other characters.



SCENE 3 – BOOK BURNING

After the Angels have explored the house for a bit, they find the library. It is full of books of every kind, mostly literary classics such as 1984, Animal Farm, The Catcher in the Rye, The Great Gatsby, Moby-Dick, The Lord of the Rings and Pride and Prejudice among many others.

There is also a special shelf with the great works of horror, such as We Have Always Lived In The Castle, Dracula, Frankenstein, The Haunting of Hill House, The Turn of the Screw, Beloved, Rebecca, The Shining and Something Wicked This Way Comes.

As an indirect rebellion against his religious foster parents, Thomas takes a Bible from the shelves, tears it to pieces and throws the pages into the fireplace. He then lights a match and proceeds to set fire to the book. If Thomas is met with opposition of any kind, he extinguishes the match and laughs:

"It's filled with lies!"

A sharp-eyed player character might notice that Thomas palms American Psycho as they leave the library. If confronted, he laughs it off and continues the exploration, putting the book in his backpack.

SCENE 4 – THE CONSERVATORY

The last scene of the flashback takes place in the conservatory. It's a large room filled with paraphernalia from different parts of the world; carved tusks of elephants and walruses, masks and model boats, weird runic statues, and the heads of about twenty different animals such as a lion, a tiger, a polar bear and so on. In one corner, there are shrunken human heads, as promised.

Thomas touches one of the heads and smiles. He imagines his foster parents beheaded like this and at this moment his mind touches that of Samael for the first time. A shudder goes through the house and a hot wind blows through the rooms. All the player characters and Thomas are filled with terror and, before they know it, they are all running down the stairs and out the front door.

This ends the flashback.

EXPLORING THE CROW'S NEST

In the present day, the adult Angels are standing outside The Crow's Nest. After the flashback, the player characters should want to explore their surroundings.

The Car

If the characters search through Kristofferson's car, they find nothing except for an overwhelming smell of offal. There are traces of blood and strands of human hair on the upholstery. The keys are in the ignition.

The Barn

If the characters open the large doors of the barn, they find that it functions both as a garage and a workshop. Tools hang on one wall, a workbench stands by another. A long ladder hangs on the third wall.

Some of the tools are disconcerting. Blood stained manacles, chains, ropes and even a head cage can be found among more common items such as hammers and screwdrivers.

Inside the house

There are several ways to enter the house, and if the players were resourceful during the second flashback, they'll remember one or more ways to break in.

As they enter the house, they find it eerily quiet. None of the light switches work. Flashlights or other personal light sources function as expected, but cast a cold light over the premises.

Shadows play hide and seek in the corners of the characters' eyes. The floor creaks under the characters' feet as they move. Judging by the smoky smell, there's a controlled fire burning somewhere in the house.

THE FIRST FLOOR

1. Veranda

Stairs leads to the small veranda in front of the door. There are a pair of Wellingtons here, and in front of the door is a stained old doormat emblazoned with "Welcome!" The door is thick, with a frosted glass window. If the characters peek through the window from the outside, they catch a glimpse of the hall.

2. Hall

A single paraffin lamp sheds its light inside the small hallway. Apart from this, the house appears to be completely dark.

There is a mat just inside the door, a series of coat hooks, and a shoe-rack. Kristofferson's boots stand on the floor in front of the shoe-rack. A rug has been crumpled up against a wall. All the doors along the hall are open and on the door to the kitchen hangs a key ring with keys to the rest of the house.

3. Stairs

The stairs lead to the second floor. Their carpets are torn and covered in mud and blood. The smell from the stains is the same as the odor in the car. The main circuit breaker is in a closet under the stairs. The main switch seems to function properly, but it is nevertheless impossible to get the electricity running.

4. Living/dining room

The combination living and dining room is furnished with a big dining table surrounded by five chairs. In one of the corners of the room there is a large-screen TV. An expensive hi-fi stereo and several loudspeakers can also be found in this room. The record collection is quite impressive, ranging from baroque classical music to modern day hits. Player characters recognize several of Thomas Kristofferson's favorite records in the collection.

5. Anterooms

Empty and devoid of any signs of recent life.

6. Kitchen

This is a big and well-furnished kitchen, but covered in the mess Kristofferson left. Pots, pans, china and leftovers lie pell-mell in the room, and the refrigerator gapes empty. The room is filled with a stale, rotten smell. A tin can on the counter holds an assortment of keys, batteries, and rubber bands. One set of keys leads both to the front door of the house as well as the locked study. A knife block nearby holds sharp culinary knives of all shapes and sizes. A trapdoor in the kitchen floor leads down into the dark cellar below the house.

7. Bathroom

A small powder room. Weekly magazines and scientific journals stand in a binder by the toilet; they are at least a decade old. The basin is soiled, and stains from blood and mud cover the floor.

8. Back hallway

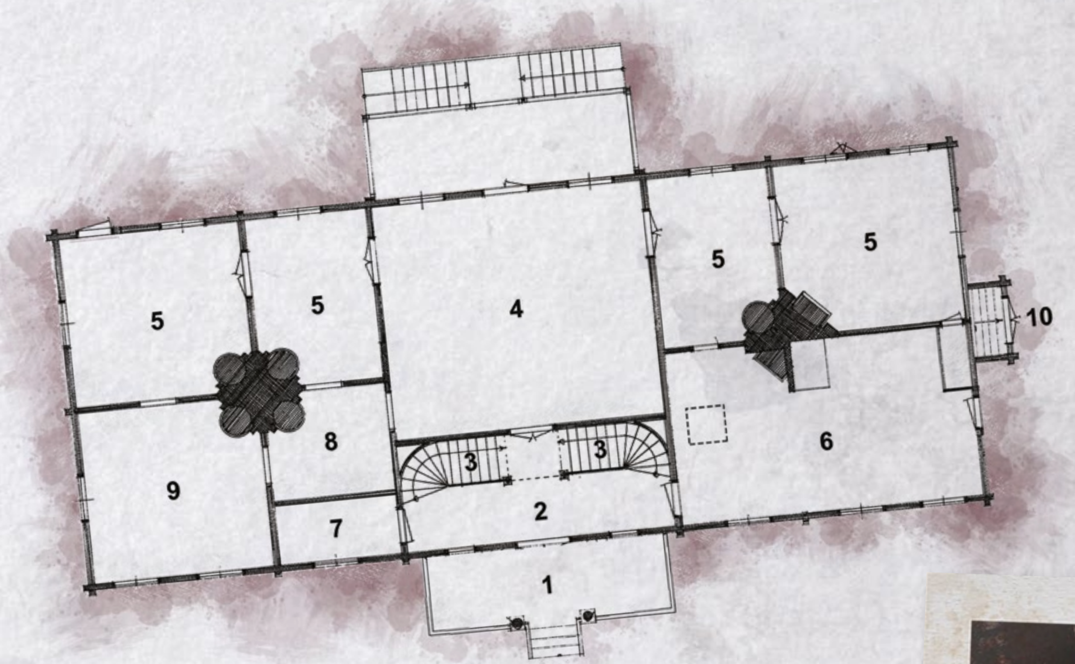
This room connects the living room, the conservatory, and the old servants' quarters with the back door. That door is locked and bolted; one must destroy it to leave the house this way.

9. Conservatory

This is the conservatory as described in the second flashback. It is still filled with freakish souvenirs from around the world, but the most disturbing fact is that there are several more shrunken heads that have been added to the collection. These are from several people who've gone missing locally. Those that see this need to ***Keep it Together***.

10. Stairs to the cellar

This is the entrance to the cellar from outside of the house. Two big doors swing open and reveal broad and rough stairs that lead down into the darkness. The keys to the cellar are in the front hall.



THE SECOND FLOOR

When the characters reach the second floor, the smell of smoke becomes stronger. If the characters yell for Thomas, they receive no answer.

11. Hall

The stairs from the ground floor lead to this small hall. All doors except the one leading to the study are open.

12. Dining room

A large room dominated by a dark dining table, large enough to seat 12 guests. A huge crystal chandelier hangs from the ceiling, centered over the table. Glass doors lead out to a large balcony.

13. Reading room

Furnished with two comfortable leather chesterfields, each with a small accompanying coffee table. Newspapers and magazines cover the floor, and mad scribblings adorn the walls. The words are mostly illegible, but here and there the words “help”, “mother”, “father”, “hate”, “friends” and “traitors” are visible.

14. Master bedroom

This is the main bedroom, and it is furnished with a large double bed. The bedclothes are crumpled up into a nest, and clothes lie scattered on the floor by the closet. Thomas has obviously chosen this to be his temporary bedroom.

15. Bedroom

A smaller bedroom, intended as a place for guests to stay. The bed is soiled with blood and filth, and gives off a nasty smell.

16. Bathroom

There is a bathtub, a shower, a toilet and a sink here. Turkish towels hang on the wall of azure Dutch tiles. The basin is soiled and the bar of soap is brown with dirt. Several of the towels are covered in stains.

17. Reception room

This used to be a waiting room, for those wishing to meet with the master of the house. It is now empty.

18. Reading room

Furnished with three comfortable leather chesterfields, each with a small accompanying coffee table. Various books on occult protection rituals are strewn across the room.

19. Library

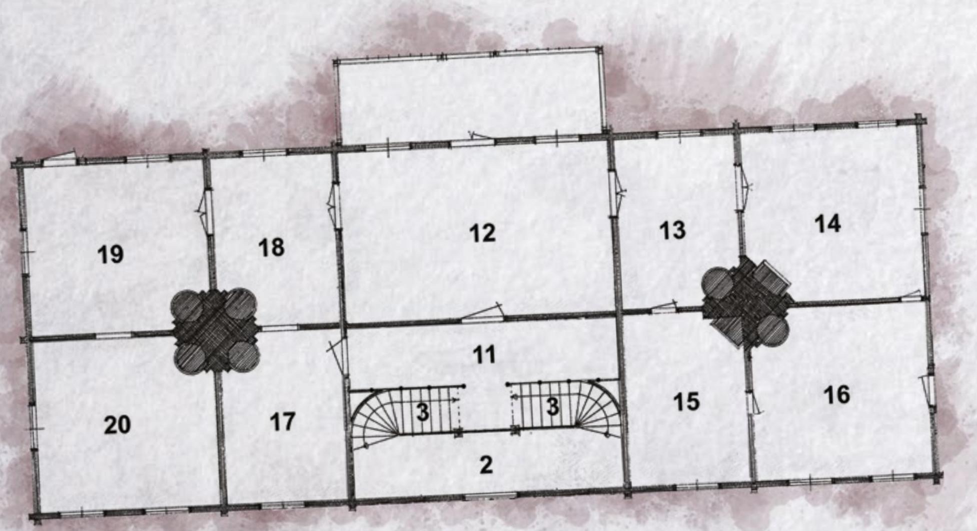
This is the library, as described in the second flashback. Not much seems to have changed over the years. The same books are there, but everything is covered in dust. The fireplace is cold and empty, but if the characters touch the bricks of the chimney it will radiate some heat, indicating that there is a fire burning somewhere else in the house.

The door leading to the study (20) is locked. Light issues forth from under the door, and the characters can hear the crackling sound of an open fire and smell smoke.

20. Study

Nobody will answer if the characters knock on the door. Proceed to the Portal section if the characters open the door, either with the keys from the first floor or with force.

If the characters manage to reach the study’s window from the outside and look in, they will see that the room is filled with smoke and that something is burning there. It is impossible to shatter the windows, but if someone tries to, or just gives the glass a knock, several inhuman faces will press against the glass. They sneer and drool, and blood runs from their open wounds. The character(s) that see this must make a successful **Act Under Pressure** not to fall to the ground (Harm 2). The faces disappear after a moment.



THE CELLAR

The cellar can be reached via the stairs outside the house and through a trapdoor in the kitchen. It only has three rooms and is used mainly for storing firewood and food.

21. Pantry

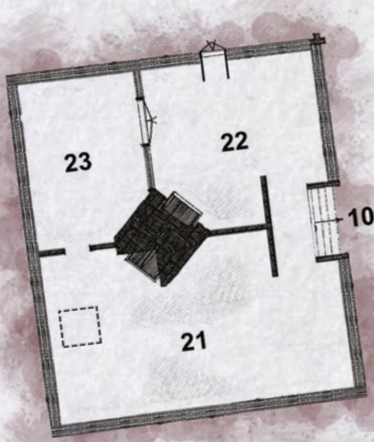
The pantry stinks of alcohol and is filled with canned food and bottled drinks (both hard and soft) of various sorts. There are quite a lot of empty vodka bottles thrown in a crate at the back of the pantry. A steep set of stairs leads up to a trapdoor opening up into the kitchen above.

22. Storage

This room is filled with firewood, stacked from floor to ceiling. An axe leans against a wood chopping block by the door. There is also an old coal chute that leads down from the outside. It is possible for an adult to squeeze through.

23. Washing room

A broken-down washer and dryer occupy this room. The floor is covered with dirty clothes. Some of them are stained and torn. There are clothes belonging to both adults and children here. It reeks of blood and decay.



The Portal

Eventually the characters understand that the answer to the problem is to be found in the study. Anyone who's tried to flee through the forest finds that they always end up at the house, regardless of what direction they fled. They are already partly trapped by Kristofferson's ritual.

The keys to the study are found in the tin can in the kitchen. It's also possible to break the door down using tools from the barn. The smell of smoke is very strong for a player character standing outside the study door.

You stare into the study. Flickering flames touch the walls and pungent smoke fills your lungs. Your eyes water and your throats turn dry.

Then you see the door. On the opposite side of the room is an asymmetric black portal whose white doorknob shimmers in the flickering firelight.

Your eyes turn upward, to the ceiling. Above you is infinite blackness, as if you were looking into some vast region of space without stars or any form of light.

Unsure of what you are looking at, you cast a quick glance behind yourselves. Despite the apparent reality of the hall behind you, you know that its truth is as fragile as the one before you is potent.

You stare at each other in despair. Reality is cracking at the seams.

All player characters lose **-2 Stability** from seeing this. The characters can really only go through the black door. If they choose not to, they are forever condemned to wander about the illusory house Thomas created to capture them.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Thomas is trapped in his purgatory, but there is still a gate that leads into our world and through this he tries to call on the characters. Perhaps he wants them to help him, perhaps he will trade their souls for his release. Not even Thomas knows. He is desperate.

That is the situation when the characters proceed into the labyrinth, not knowing the part they play in this infernal drama.

THE LABYRINTH

When the player characters open the second door in the study they find themselves standing at the threshold of the Gatherer's labyrinth.

You stare into a long corridor. Your eyes are drawn to the white walls that seem to be smeared in blood. From the distance you hear moans, sobs and tormented cries. The walls stretch hundreds of meters up in the air, and you catch a glimpse of huge scavenging birds that soar on the upwinds.

The labyrinth leads into the purgatory, and from there deeper into Inferno and the halls of Samael's citadel. This maze is the Gatherer's creation. He hungers for Thomas's soul and has no real interest in the player characters. The labyrinth is just there to keep them out of the way. If they get lost here, they might wander through this labyrinth forever.

If a player character gets separated from the others, let them stumble upon each other at one of the crossroads. Their old friendship pulls them together. If a player character dies in the labyrinth, loses all **Stability**, or surrenders completely to vengeance and hate and willingly walks away from the others, they will appear as a shackled slave to the Gatherer in the end scene.

Mix the scenes from **The Crossroads** with the scenes from **Dark Secrets Awakening** as the PC moves through the Labyrinth.

THE ARMS OF THE SUFFERING

There are places in the labyrinth where hands and arms stick out from the walls, grasping and grabbing for anyone coming close. This happens more often when player characters get separated from each other.

Hands reach out from the walls and grope for you and each other. Deformed children's faces press at the surface, screaming in pain and agony.

If the player characters are careful and keep themselves in the middle of the corridor, the risk of getting caught is minimal. If they stand by or close to the wall, the arms try to grab them.

If they are caught, the faces will come to the surface of the wall and bite the captured characters. A player character that does not get any help or cannot manage to break free is in serious trouble. Any characters that get killed from the bites are drawn into the wall and disappear without a trace and appear as shackled slaves to the Gatherer in the end scene.

The arms and faces have the following attacks:

Grapple [1] [Distance: arm, the victim must ***Act Under Pressure*** to get away]

Bite [2] [Distance: arm, only grappled victims]

Dark Secrets Awakening

Now that the players are in Inferno, their own Dark Secrets will come to life. Feel free to sprinkle the scenes with glimpses from their own dark and haunted pasts. These are all apparitions that will fade away if ignored or avoided. Below are some scenes, but feel free to create others:

MICHAEL

Michael (and probably the others if they haven't gotten separated) encounters one of the men he injured badly in one of the underground fighting events. The man is bruised, bleeding, and stumbles through the labyrinth. When he sees Michael, he backs away and begs him not to hurt him. Michael is overcome with a bestial aggression and a desire to "finish him". He must ***Keep it Together*** with a -2 modifier not to beat him to death with his fists right then and there. Each friend that tries to stop him, talk to him, or make him snap out of it in a kind or understanding way gives him *+2 on the roll.*

RALPH

Suddenly flickering images are projected on the walls and sound echoes through the corridors. Faces, bodies, private chat messages, and in a dark room we see Ralph at his computer gathering all this information. Chat messages are displayed on the walls, threatening to reveal secrets and spread intimate pictures. The other characters can see their faces, and gathered information about them flickers past. Ursula's journals, Michael's service records, their addresses and phone numbers. Then we see pictures of Gabrielle, lots of pictures from Gabrielle from wild parties, where she is dressed in tight skirts, clips from shows where she plays, her making out with men and women. On one wall we see a close up on Ralph's face. It is covered in sweat and twisted in grotesque ecstasy. His eyes moving back and forth manically. Drinking it all in. Ralph will need to ***Keep it Together***.

URSULA

Ursula's bottle of pills rattles, as if it contains something alive. If she opens the lid, or if she drops or throws the bottle, lice crawl out and talk to her in small voices. So many voices from former friends, colleagues and family that all shout at her in anger, sadness or frustration. "Why can't anything be simple with you?", "I don't have time for another panic attack", "No one will ever want to be together with a wreck like you", "Messed up girl, grow up!" The voices change and all of them become Ursula's own voice that shouts at her as the lice crawl all over her. She must ***Keep it Together*** with a -2 modifier not to run away from the others into the Labyrinth. Each friend that tries to calm her down, get the lice off of her, and/or be there for her gives her *+2 on the roll.* If they use anger, harsh language or violence, she gets no bonuses.

GABRIELLE

On the wall hangs a full-length mirror. When Gabrielle looks into it she sees herself dressed in a tight, short dress, ballet boots, and heavy makeup. This was how Jerod Warner, her ex, wanted her to dress. There is a burning sensation on her arm and she discovers that the tattoo with his name that she removed has appeared again and now bleeds through the pores. She sees him stand behind her in the mirror. Hands on her waist, kissing her neck. "I forgive you baby, come back to me," he says. She feels his power over her and how she can't break free from him. She needs to ***Keep it Together*** with a -2 modifier not to be mesmerized by the mirror. Each friend that tries to talk to her and support her gives her *+2 on the roll*. If they use anger and harsh language or violence, Gabrielle gets no bonuses.

THE BIKES

In a pile on the floor, rusted, blackened and twisted, lie the bikes the Angels rode on when they were kids. They are covered with soot as if they had been in a great fire. If they touch the bikes, they discover that the colors still remain under the soot. Just touching them, even though they're burnt and broken, allows the characters to feel the joy of their pasts and regain **+1 Stability**.

THE HOLE IN THE WALL

There is a hole in the wall, big enough for a character to peek into. You look straight inside the kitchen of the foster home where Thomas grew up. Nothing the characters say or do affects the scene that transpires. Thomas is a boy and sits at the kitchen table with his foster siblings. The foster mom places a roast from the oven and the father starts dishing out mashed potatoes. Mrs. Donner cries for him to wait and then takes a picture with her Polaroid camera of the whole family scene and her roast. They then say prayers and sit down to eat. Thomas eats in silence. His foster father, Mr. Donner says, "Why don't you bring one of your friends over for a sleepover on Friday?". Thomas stiffens and doesn't reply. The scene plays out and it is evident that the parents want him to bring his friends over, but the whole scene has a sinister tone to it and Thomas refuses. It ends with the foster father grabbing him, pulling him from the table and into another room (out of sight). The foster mother follows, but brings the camera. The sound of someone being beaten with a belt is heard and the flashes from the Polaroid camera can be seen.

GLIMPSE OF THE GATHERER

From one of the side corridors that ends in darkness, there is a warm gust of wind and a smell of burnt flesh. It is a feeling that someone, or something, is approaching, slowly marching through the darkness. This is the Gatherer. There are whispers in the wind. "The Gatherer, he is coming. He is coming." If the player stays or walks into the corridor, they will feel a great fear overtake them and a mind will touch theirs. They will lose **-2 Stability** and their hands are now covered in soot. And then the presence is gone – for now.

The Crossroads

There are three crossroads in the labyrinth. The characters must pass through all three before they find Thomas. The characters must pass several corridors between each crossroad as well. Even though these corridors will not help the characters escape the labyrinth, they are used to enhance the atmosphere and confuse the characters.

No matter which way the characters choose, they will reach the crossroads in numerical order.

THE FIRST CROSSROAD

The crossroad is furnished like an eight-year-old's playroom, and among the toys that lie scattered on the floor, the characters find a mutilated teddy bear and a tower of alphabet blocks that spell the word "HATE" over and over again. A little child's painting of an angel hangs on one wall, and beneath it is written the name of the character that was kindest to Thomas in flashbacks (this character regains **+1 Stability**) . Next to it hangs a similar painting of a faceless devil, and beneath it is the name of the player character that has shown least sympathy to the young boy (This character loses **-1 Stability**).

Children's voices are heard in the distance, repeating two words over and over: SINNER and SAINT.

THE SECOND CROSSROAD

A newspaper article describing the disappearance of the twelve-year-old Thomas and the massacre at his foster parents' home lies on the floor. Press cuttings on other murders of families and cases of assaults lie scattered in the corridor or hang nailed to the walls.

On a lone desk is an old typewriter, an Adler 1938 model Favorite 2 with an old-looking Fraktur typeface. This is the typewriter that Thomas used to write the letters to the player characters.

A character that studies the typewriter notices that it stands on top of a stained, brown folder. Inside of it is an old, folded photo of the Angels on their bikes taken during some idyllic summer day. They are eating cotton candy outside an amusement park. Thomas is holding a big teddy bear that he won as a prize. This photo is something Thomas brought with him when he fled with the Jackals.

THE THIRD CROSSROAD

This is also a four-way crossing. Walls and floors show roughly painted pictures of men and women being tormented in a multitude of ways. The images show children as the tormentors, visiting unspeakable torment on the adults. If the player characters examine the painted pictures closely, the images writhe and shift under their gaze. The static images change into animated scenes of grisly torture, and now the torturers are the player characters as children. Anyone that watches long enough must ***Keep it Together***.

Examining the images also reveals sentences written in ash and ink on the walls and floors:

"I shall escape. They shall burn, not I!"

These are scenes and words from Thomas's terrified and fractured mind, and should give the characters an idea of what is going on.

APPROACHING THE PURGATORY

Closer to the Purgatory, the characters start finding Polaroid pictures on the floor. First one, then another, and soon there is a long trail of them. All the pictures portray Thomas as a young boy with fear, pain and sometimes shame in his eyes. On some, the player characters see the strong hand of a man holding him still in front of the camera, on others they see the bruises and the tears, and still others are much, much worse.

Then a wind comes and blows them away. The ground has changed. It is now grass. They walk among trees. They are next to the lake where they used to hang out. The characters see themselves as children. Their bikes left on the ground, how they were building a fire next to the shore.

Thomas is there, carrying dried sticks to feed the fire. He looks up and sees you.

As the player characters enter the purgatory, the third and final flashback begins.

THE DAY BEFORE

Third Flashback

The third flashback takes place one day before the events of the first flashback. The player characters are enjoying a quiet and lazy summer day. They've biked to a nearby lake and have put their everyday problems on hold for a short while. The scene should be a reminder of the good times.

All of the players will be busy doing something. Maybe Michael is blowing on the fire to make the flames get hold of the wood. Perhaps Gabrielle is sitting with her feet in the water, feeling how cold it is, Ursula is grabbing sodas and sausages from a backpack and Ralph is fixing the chain on his bike. Thomas' voice interrupts them: "Who are they?"

He carries sticks in his arms and is looking at the tree line next to the lake. The characters were standing there as adults just a moment ago. Thomas will claim that he thought he saw a group of people among the trees, but he's probably mistaken. Either that or older kids are messing with them.

During the scene Thomas will be inquisitive and ask the player characters:

- Why do the other kids always mess with us?
- Why is the world so fucked up?
- Why are we friends?
- What are you going to do when you grow up?
- Will you stay here or leave for the big city?

At first, Thomas is genuinely interested in the answers the others give him. If Thomas is asked the same questions, his answers will be vague and confused, even terrifying at times.

- The other kids don't know what real friendship is.
- The world is rotten. Adults are rotten.
- We are friends because we suffer together.
- I'll never grow up.
- I'll never escape this town.

As the characters continue to talk, he is clearly more and more upset. He does not want to return home. He knows what awaits him there. He is terse and non-committal, and if pushed he will lash out at his friends, clearly under distress. He will not talk about his foster parents. He will break down and start sobbing, pushing them away at first, but eventually allowing characters to hug him.

He will say: "I'm suffocating. The anger fills me up. It's like I'm drowning."

After this, Thomas seems slightly happier. The scene ends when the characters all ride home on their bicycles. They decide to meet at the lake the following day. Thomas is bicycling home to the night of the Jackals and the massacre.

THE PURGATORY

The flashback ends and the player characters stand outside the door to Kristofferson's purgatory.

The door looks like the one you opened when you entered the labyrinth. Light issues forth from the space between the door and the threshold, and you hear hollow and mumbling voices from behind the barrier. A sickly smell of blood and urine permeates the air.

Thomas and the Gatherer are at each other's throats. Behind the door, the characters will find Kristofferson's purgatory. It looks like his room at the Donners' house.

A small lamp glows on a table by the bed. Shelves line the walls, and on the upper ones lie all sorts of games, books and comics. The lower shelves are all covered with broken glass, stained with dark red blood.

A huge teddy bear, mutilated and pierced with several knives, dangles at the end of a hangman's noose. You recognize it as a prize your friend won at an amusement park, years and years ago. Blood and pus trickles from the teddy bear's open wounds.

The walls are covered with pictures of lonely and crying children, and menacing shadows fall into the room through small windows. A hard rain rattles on the windowsills.

You see Thomas, but as an adult. He looks worn and old. Madness is burning in his eyes as he sits huddled up in his bed. He is clutching a toy tiger to his chest and is staring at nothing, straight ahead.

A protective circle has been drawn around the bed with crayons and just outside stand two grotesque shapes – the twisted forms of his foster parents, staring at him. Mr. Donner, looming and stern, holding his leather belt in his hand. Mrs. Donner, giggling hysterically. Taking picture after picture with a Polaroid camera. Click – churr, click – churr.

These creatures are Thomas's tormentors, the twisted souls of his foster parents, torn from their own purgatories and given form from the visions in the man's feverish brain. They cannot yet pass the circle but are slowly wearing him down.

It is up to the player characters to decide how to act. The foster parents have their focus on Thomas but if the characters approach, the foster parents will focus on them instead. The woman takes their picture and laughs with a screech, and the father licks his lips and grabs his belt with two hands.

"Come to Daddy."

The characters find that they cannot approach Thomas. The protective circle that keeps his demons out also keeps them out.

If they attack the Donners and defeat them, Thomas begins to recognize them, but still has that thousand-yard stare. He clutches the toy tiger closer to his chest.

The Gatherer Arrives

When the GM finds it fitting, the Gatherer slowly emerges from the shadows. The first thing the player characters notice is the smell of burning flesh and then the red light of the iron mask and the iron gloves. The room seems to expand. The characters suddenly discover that they are standing at a distance of several meters from each other. The door leading to the labyrinth has vanished. The Donners, if they are still alive, throw themselves to the floor, scream, and crawl into the shadows like wild animals.

To enhance the atmosphere, you should describe in detail the odd feeling the player characters experience when all the walls suddenly grow to fifty meters high and their own bodies turn thin as matchsticks. They are paralyzed, unable to move.

The Gatherer stares at the characters for a short while, and then turns his gaze toward the bed.

"Who are these souls that you have brought home?"

Thomas flinches as from a blow. He reaches out towards you and cries out in hate and fear with an unnaturally shrill voice.

"Take them instead. They are yours, you have no power over me. Take them!"

The nightmarish creature turns to you once again. His masked face scrutinizes you thoroughly. His voice is cold and dead. *"The Sinner and the Angels. Who will accept guilt for what has happened here?"*

The Confrontation

The scenario can end in a number of different ways.

FRIENDSHIP CONQUERS ALL

If the player characters adamantly stand by Thomas, if they have reforged their friendship despite the experiences in the Labyrinth, and they are willing to stay with Thomas rather than abandon him, it's enough to make the nepharite lose the grip he has on Thomas. For now.

One way to do this is to have each player write down what their characters really feel on a note and hand it to the GM. The questions they each should answer is:

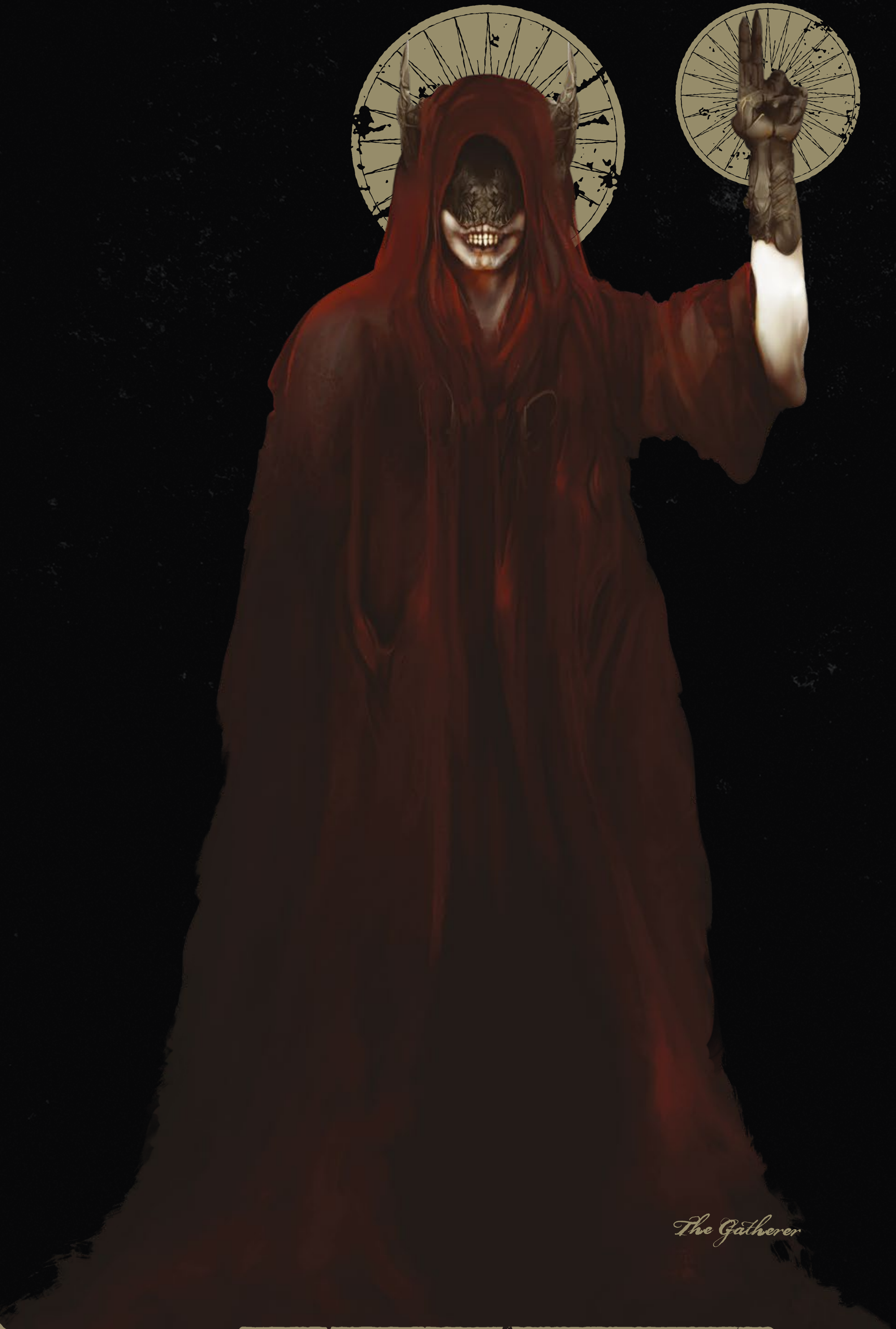
Can you forgive Thomas for dragging you into this?

Do all of your friends, including Thomas, deserve to leave the Labyrinth?

If all players write Yes to both, the Gatherer will back into the shadows. Thomas appears in the same room as the player characters; he is mentally broken and overcome by guilt. So many lives on his hands and he also was about to kill his only friends. See **Escape**.

MAKING THOMAS REMEMBER THEIR FRIENDSHIP

It is possible to persuade Thomas to let the player characters go. If they make him remember their friendship and treated him well during the flashbacks, he begs the Gatherer to let them go. He confesses that he made a mistake and regrets that he pulled them into this world.



The Gatherer

"Please forgive me! I wanted revenge. I wanted it so badly I started seeing everyone as my enemy. But instead, I lost my friends."

With these words Thomas steps out of his circle and lets himself be taken by the Gatherer. See **Escape**.

MAKING A DEAL WITH THE GATHERER

If the players try to convince the Gatherer to let them go, he may offer them a way out. If they break Thomas's circle, he will release them.

"If you destroy his will, and pour your hatred and vengeance over him, only then will I not take you with me."

The characters need to gang up on Thomas and tell him how much they hate him. This breaks the last humanity in him. Their abuse finally shatters him and the circle breaks, letting the nepharite step inside and lift Thomas up like a rag doll. The purgatory fades around the characters. The last thing they hear is Thomas's desperate screams. See **Escape**.

THE GATHERER ACCEPTS THOMAS'S DEAL

The Gatherer doesn't like it, but he accepts Thomas' deal, somewhat amused by his ingenuity. As a final step in his sadism, the nepharite tells the characters that their souls are more than enough and that he doesn't want to take more than he should. One of them may return from hell, but they need to decide who. If they can't or won't decide, the Gatherer picks the one that hates Thomas the most and sends them back – along with Thomas himself. This character appears in the same room as Thomas. See **Escape**.

ATTACKING THE GATHERER

Attacking the Gatherer is not a good idea. The nepharite is powerful in his realm and the player characters have almost no chance of defeating him. He radiates such power that even trying to move towards him should force a character to ***Keep it Together***. By raising his hand he can radiate a searing heat that makes blisters appear on the victim causing a **Serious** or **Critical Wound** (up to the GM).

ATTACKING THOMAS

The characters cannot cross the circle to reach him. He is outside their grasp.

BECOMING A SERVANT OF SAMAEL

If a character has shown a particularly nasty or sadistic side throughout the scenario, the nepharite may give that person the option to become a servant of Samael. The player character will become the Death Angel's agent in the world, given magic powers and the ability to see parts of the reality beyond the Illusion. If the character accepts, the Gatherer demands that the character shows their loyalty by cutting off three ounces of flesh from Thomas's body (another characters flesh will do if the characters haven't broken the circle or if the nepharite accepted Thomas's deal.) and placing it at the nepharites feet.

The player character that performs the torture must ***Keep it Together***. Even if this succeeds, the perpetrator loses **-2 Stability**.

When leaving the purgatory, the player character appears beneath a bridge in the city. With them is a homeless man, the Jackal that delivered the letter. *"We have much to do, Master"*, the man says. The character looks out into a dark reality with newfound powers, but a vicious and unforgiving destiny.

Escape

You blink and shake your heads, and find yourselves in the study on the second floor. You are greeted by dawn's first light as the sun is struggling to make its way up over the treetops.

The player characters return to the house where they began their journey into Inferno. It is only those that have survived and weren't taken by the Gatherer who return, and they retain any injuries they have sustained.

It might be the player characters who return, or it might be Thomas and only one player character. Let the players play out one last scene where they try to make sense of what has happened. If he is there, and because he made the deal, Thomas will try to leave the house as quickly as possible by any means necessary. If the player characters rescued him, he breaks down in tears and succumbs to his grief. This is the first time someone has ever shown him unconditional love, and he doesn't know how to cope.

The only thing left to do is to leave the house and return to the city. The surviving player characters may never really understand what happened or precisely what part they played in this drama. Where have they been? What forces were involved?

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Thomas Kristofferson

Thomas is an emotionally scarred person. Throughout his entire childhood he has been used by those stronger than him, and as a result of this he hates all authorities. He killed people in fits of rage when they tried to order him around. For further information, see the background to this adventure.

Thomas is cold-blooded and cunning, but also deeply traumatized and terrified.

The Foster Parents

Gruesome caricatures of Kristofferson's foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. Donner. Their bodies are pale, jaundiced yellow-green and their skin glistens with sweat. They wear ill-fitting clothes stained by coffee and blood. The pair seem to have gotten out of bed just recently – definitely not in their best of moods. They drool constantly and smell of bad breath and liquor.

Home: Inferno.

Creature Type: Tormentors of Thomas Kristofferson.

Abilities

- *Fanatical:* Cannot be reasoned with.
- *Resistance to injury:* Firearms and edged weapons do **−1 Harm**.

Combat [3], **Influence** [–], **Magic** [–].

Combat [Considerable]

- Distract with Camera Flash.
- Surround someone.
- Strangle (with belt).

Attacks

The Father has a leather belt that he might strangle or beat someone with. The mother will take pictures with her Polaroid camera and use the sharp flash to distract but she has a steak knife ready as well.

Belt: Strangle with Belt [1] [Distance: arm, ***Act Under Pressure*** to get loose]; Choke out [*], [Distance: arm, target must be strangled, *knocked out* if failing to ***Endure Injury***].

Camera Flash: Bright flash [-] [Distance: Room, the camera flash causes intense pain, ***Keep it Together*** or get -2 on the next roll].

Knife: Cut up [2] [Distance: arm].

Fists/Belt: Beating and punching [1] [Distance: arm].

Wounds & Harm Moves

Wounds: ○○○○○☠

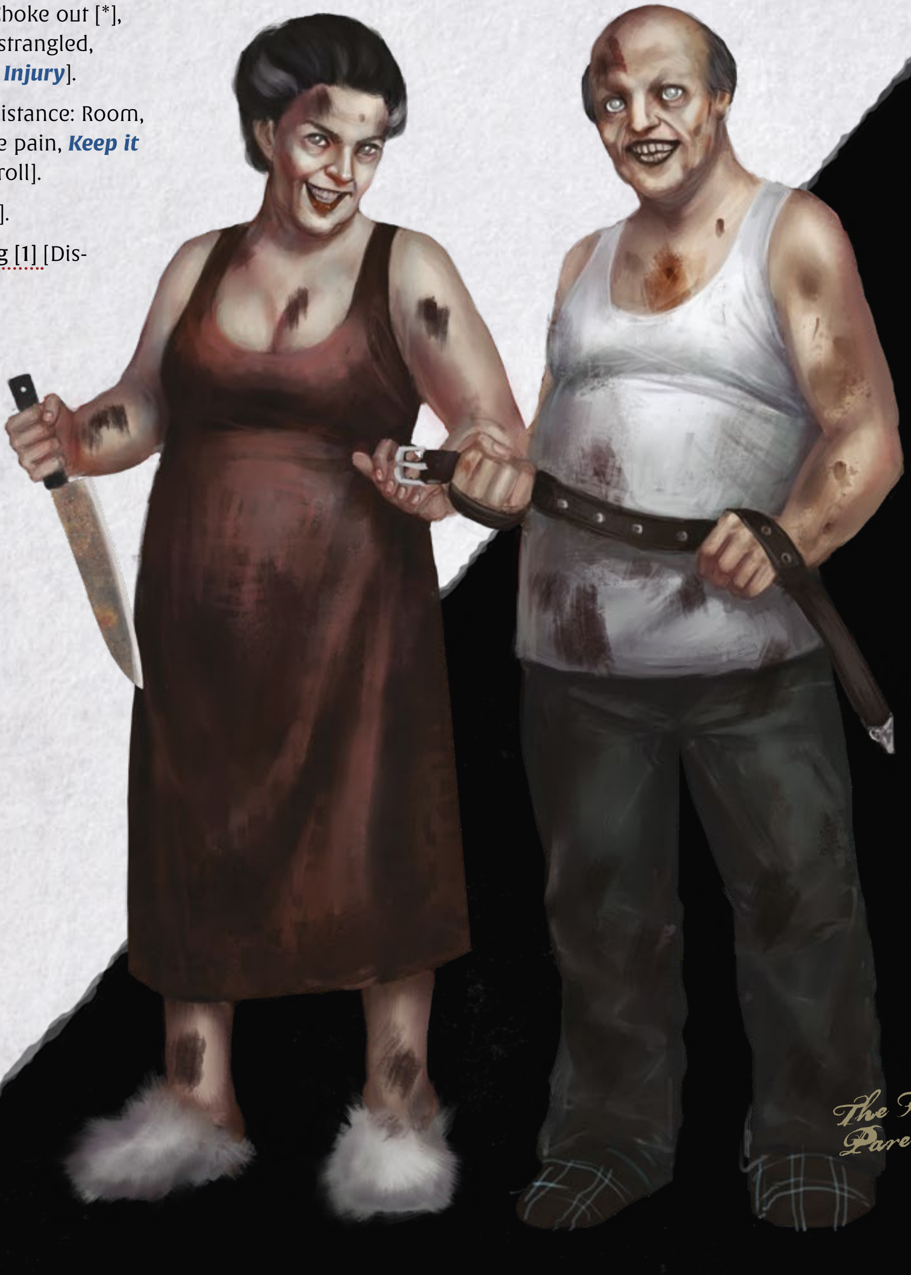
- Ignore the injuries.
- Cry to Thomas for help.
- Lose control of something.
- Appear defeated.
- Dies with a confused look on their face.

The Gatherer

The Gatherer is an ancient Nepharite serving Samael. He takes the form of a tall man dressed in red, flowing robes. He wears gloves of iron and an iron helmet is nailed into his head, covering most of his face. The smell of charred flesh follows in the nepharite's wake and he irradiates a great heat.

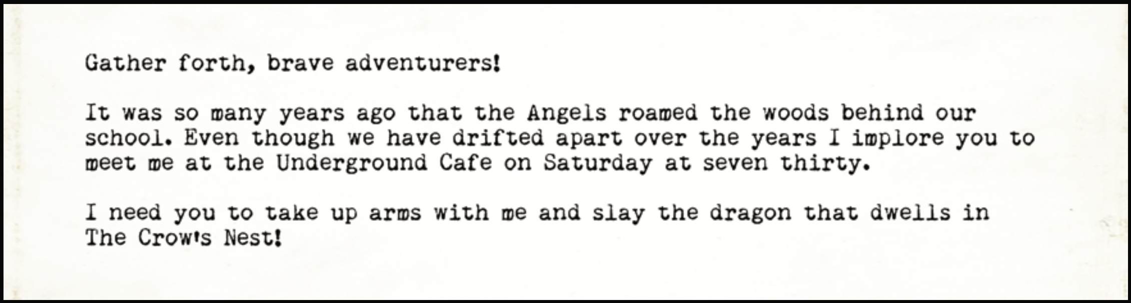
Chained to his waist are three large chests, which he drags behind him as he moves. These are filled with souls of the damned, innocent sacrifices, artifacts of unknown origin and strange, forbidden machinery.

The Gatherer has no attributes in this scenario since in the purgatory the sleeper characters have no chance of defeating him in simple combat. Should he be attacked, he raises his hand and a wave of heat is unleashed. It will not cause a fire but it will melt skin, cause blisters, singe hair and may cause the blood to boil, thus killing the victim. The Gamemaster may cause a **Serious** or **Critical Wound** on any player character in the vicinity when the Gatherer attacks.



The Foster Parents

Handout 1

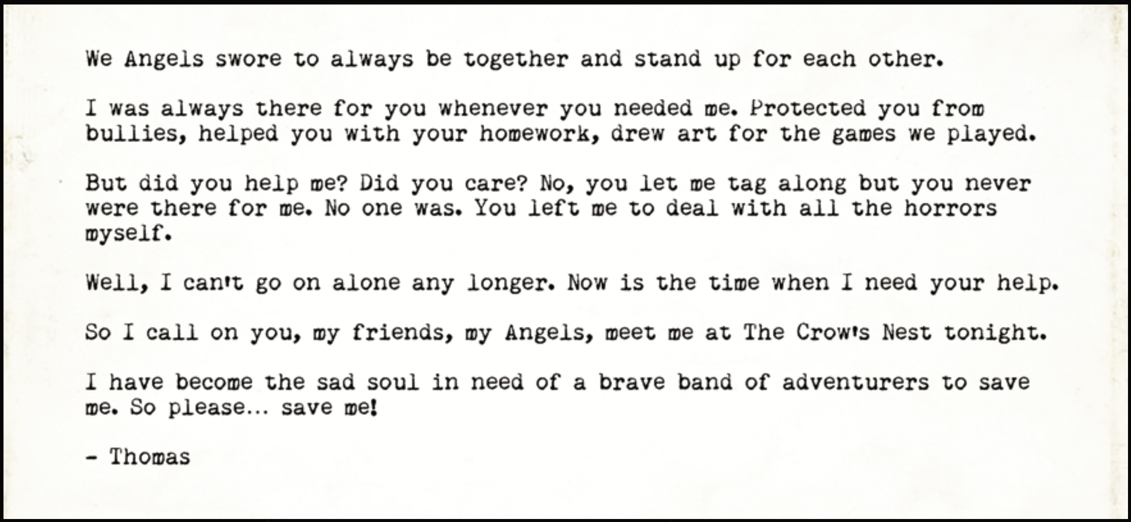


Gather forth, brave adventurers!

It was so many years ago that the Angels roamed the woods behind our school. Even though we have drifted apart over the years I implore you to meet me at the Underground Cafe on Saturday at seven thirty.

I need you to take up arms with me and slay the dragon that dwells in The Crow's Nest!

Handout 2



We Angels swore to always be together and stand up for each other.

I was always there for you whenever you needed me. Protected you from bullies, helped you with your homework, drew art for the games we played.

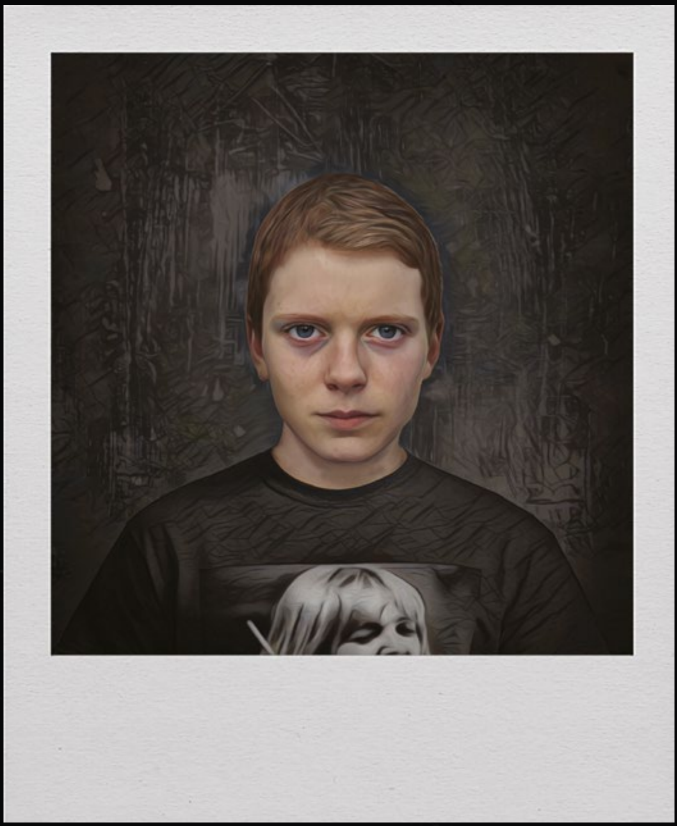
But did you help me? Did you care? No, you let me tag along but you never were there for me. No one was. You left me to deal with all the horrors myself.

Well, I can't go on alone any longer. Now is the time when I need your help.

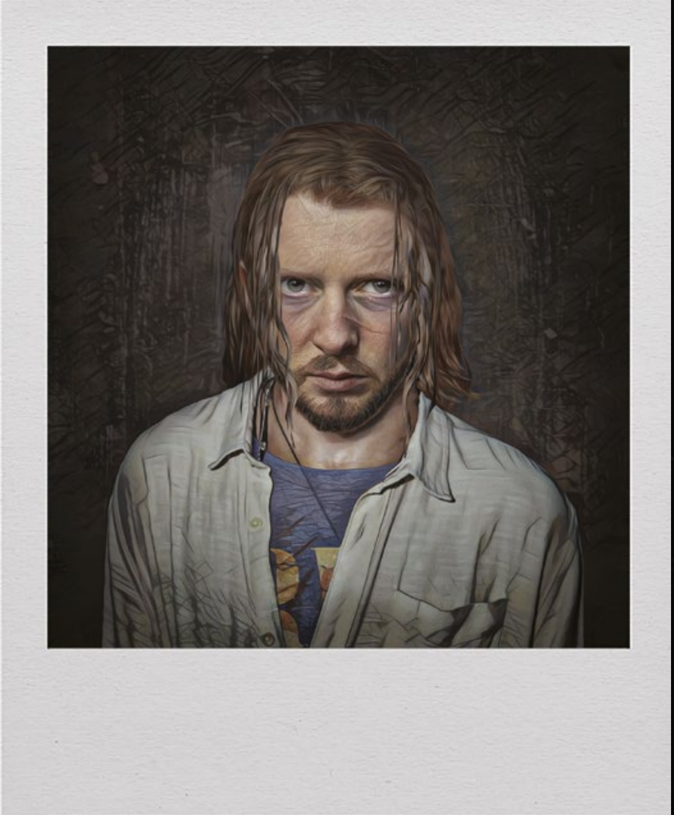
So I call on you, my friends, my Angels, meet me at The Crow's Nest tonight.

I have become the sad soul in need of a brave band of adventurers to save me. So please... save me!

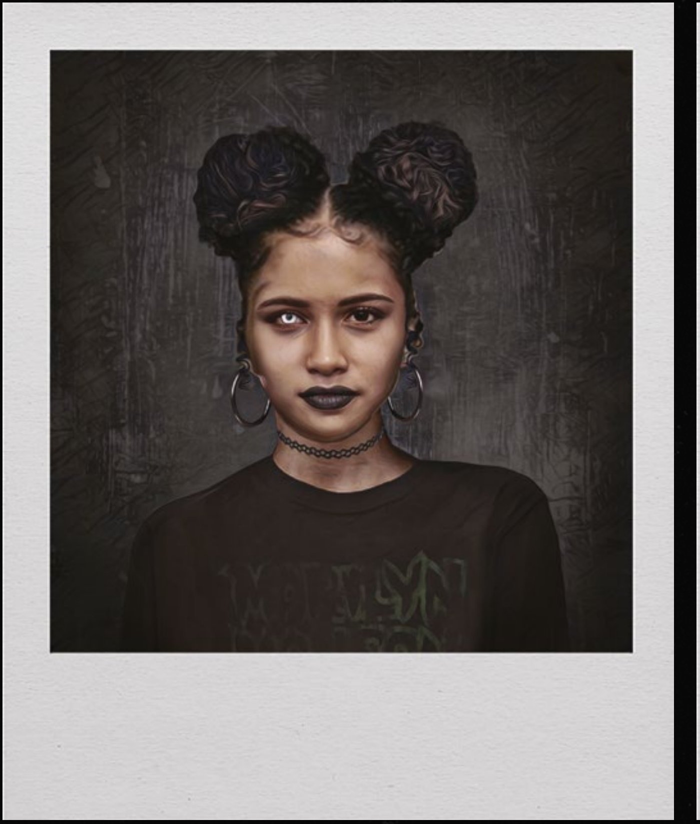
- Thomas



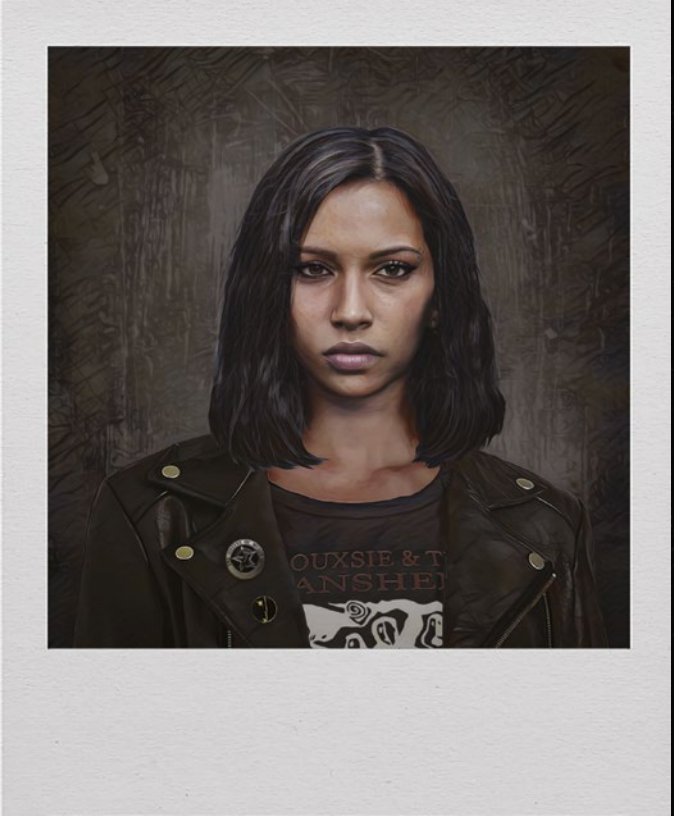
Thomas 12



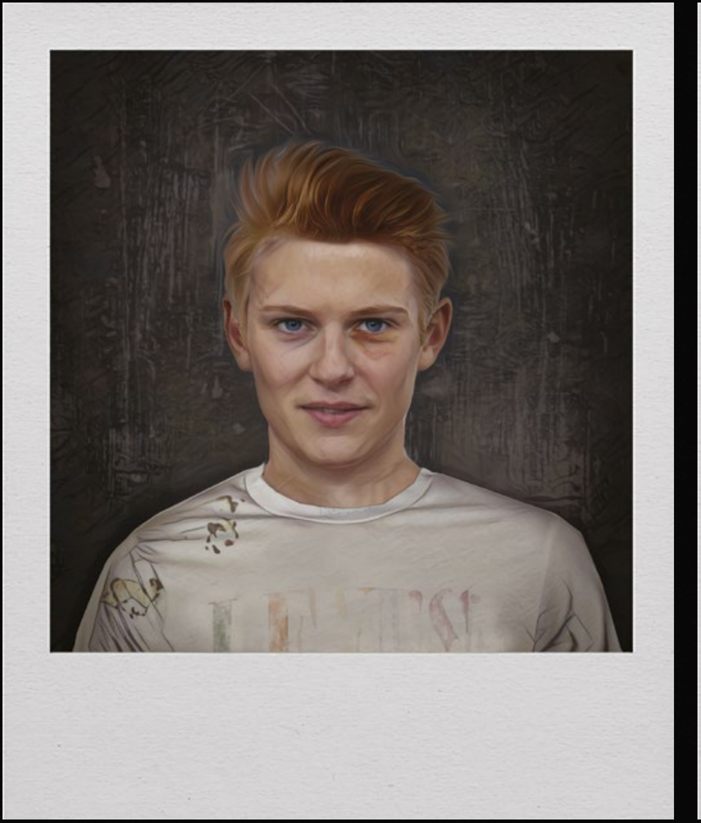
Thomas 32



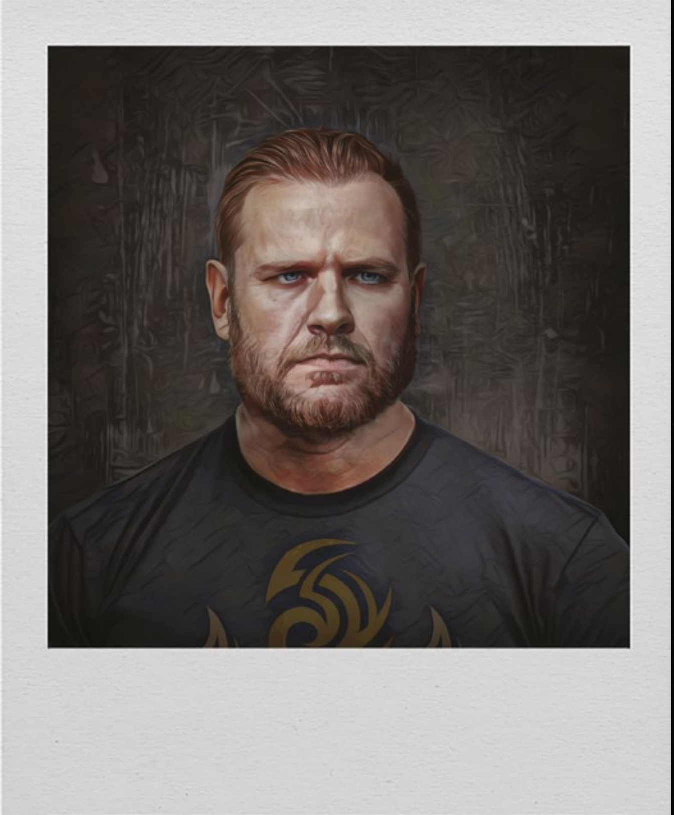
Gabrielle 12


OUXSIE & T
ANSHEE

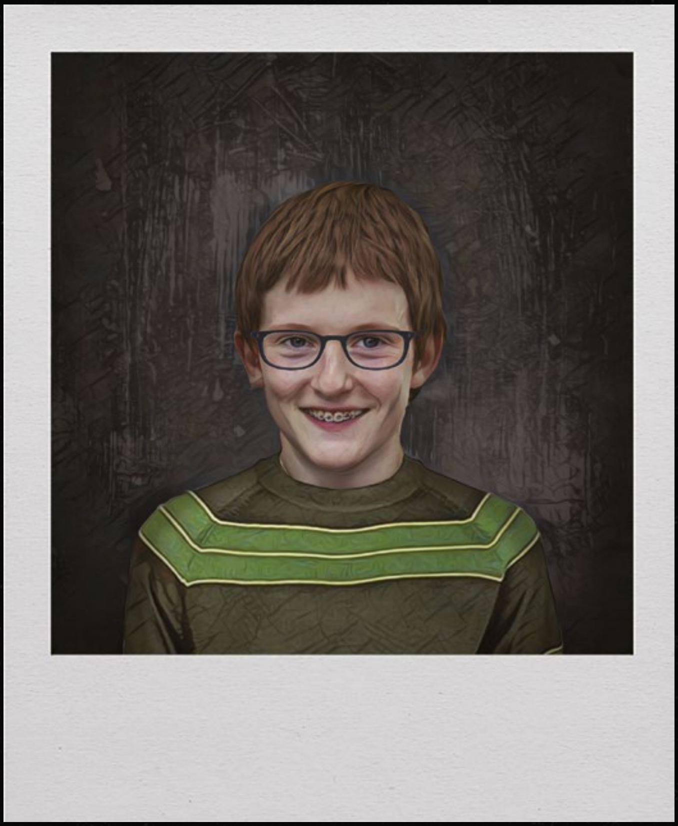
Gabrielle 32



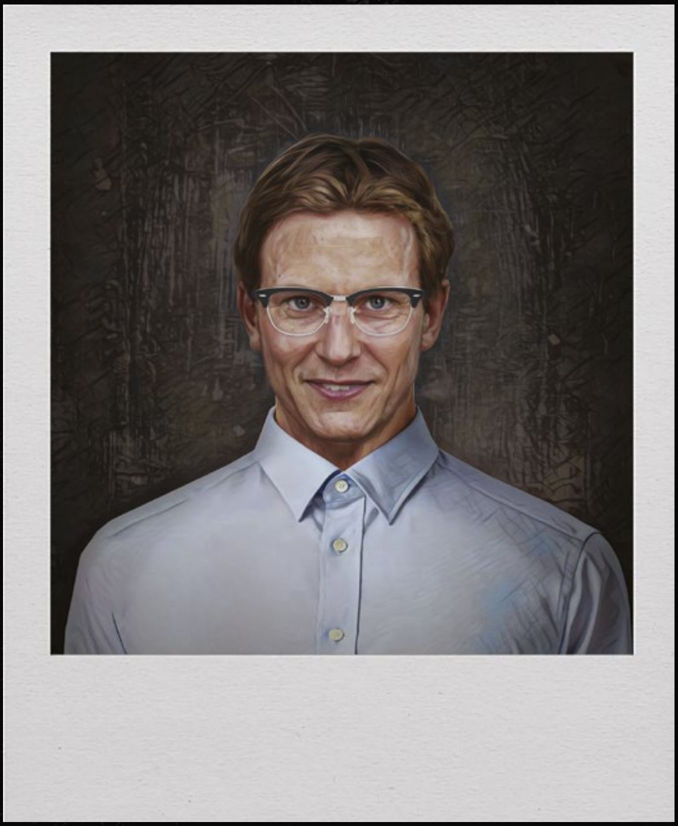
Michael 12



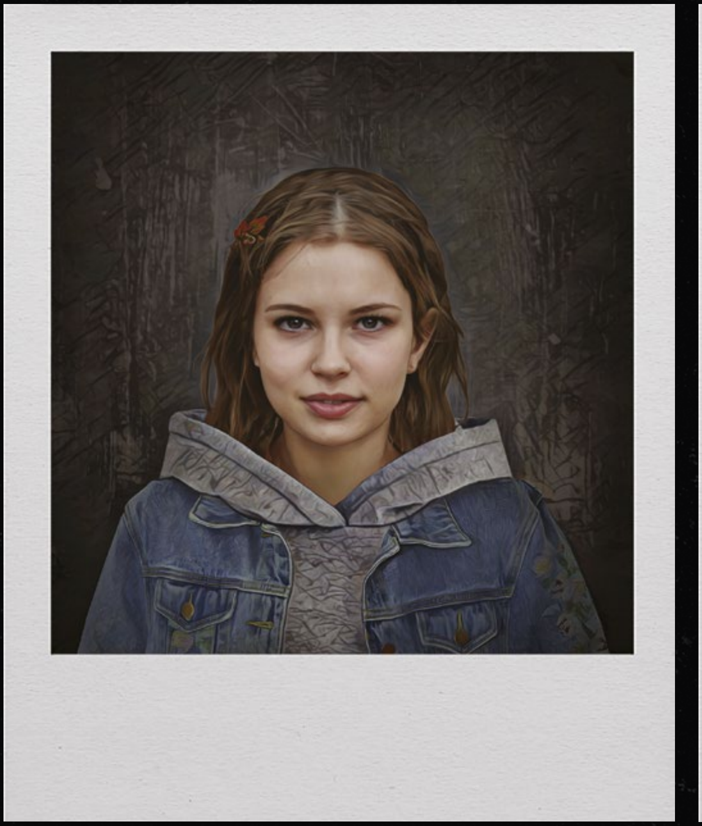
Michael 32



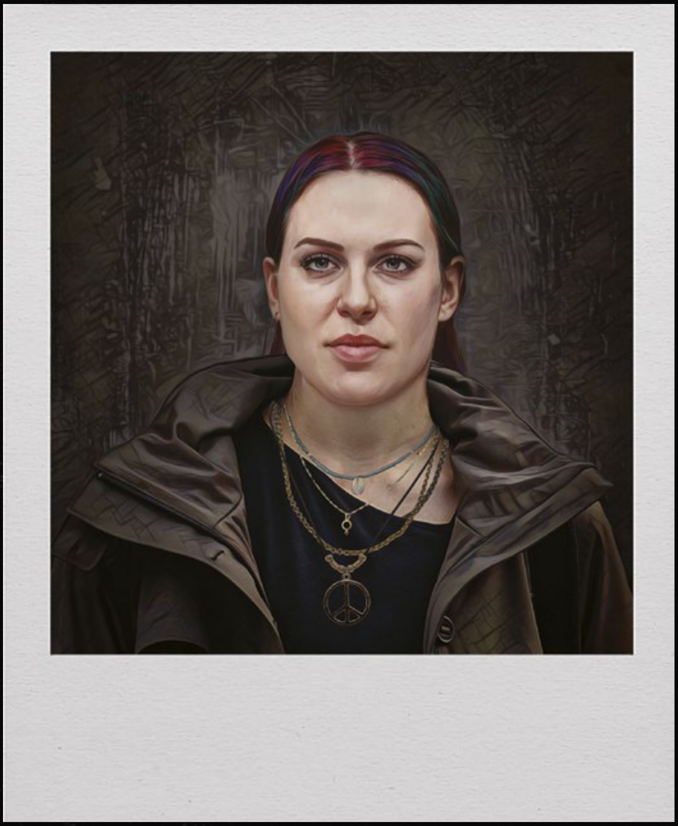
Ralph 12



Ralph 32



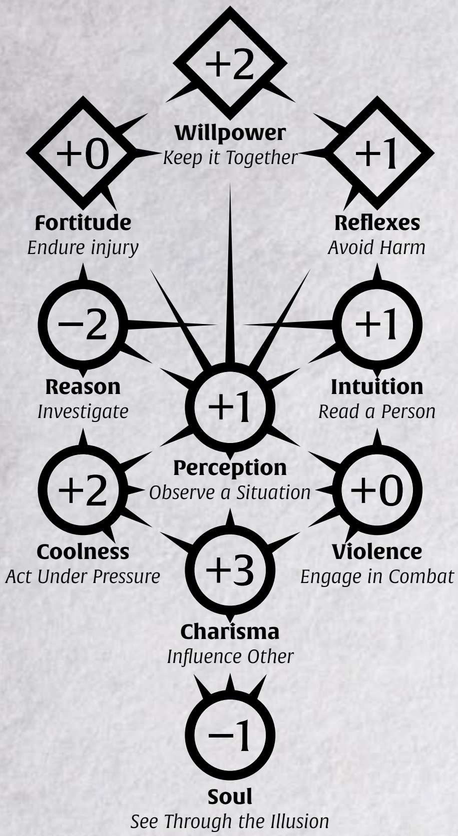
Ursula 12



Ursula 32

GABRIELLE

Attributes


+2 **Willpower** *Keep it Together*

+0 **Fortitude** *Endure injury*

+1 **Reflexes** *Avoid Harm*

−2 **Reason** *Investigate*

+1 **Intuition** *Read a Person*

+1 **Perception** *Observe a Situation*

+2 **Coolness** *Act Under Pressure*

+0 **Violence** *Engage in Combat*

+3 **Charisma** *Influence Other*

−1 **Soul** *See Through the Illusion*

Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

■	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Who you are

You are 32 years old and work as a studio musician and sound technician. You embraced the goth subculture as soon as you learned of its existence. Music is your life and you always have Spotify streaming classics such as Bauhaus, The Cure, Joy Division, Sisters of Mercy and Siouxsie and the Banshees.

After you left home to chase your dreams in the big city, you became deeply embroiled in the underground social scene and overwhelmed by the novelty of it all. Drugs and alcohol dominated your life. You managed to get away from it eventually and haven't attended the big parties ever since.

You've returned to your home town and live in your two-room apartment with your cat Medusa, an assortment of instruments, and lots of LP records. You know a lot of people, but have no real friends. You have problems with trust and dislike arrogant people who take up too much space – they seem so selfish.

Dark Secret

During your wild days, you ended up in a relationship with Jerod Warner, a famous artist and figurehead within the goth subculture. You listened to his music since your childhood, and you hate to admit it but you were starstruck. The relationships soon became destructive, and you lost yourself to his abuse. He told you how to dress, what friends to have, to stop playing music ("you're not good enough") and you even tattooed his name, Jerod, on your upper arm. He showed you off as a trophy, in minimal dresses and high heels, using you as bait for threesomes, and always talking over you. You blame yourself for not being strong enough to break free – he dumped you. You've hated yourself for your "weakness" ever since. You removed the tattoo of his name, but the guilt and self-hatred lasts forever.

Who You Were as a Kid

You never wanted to be normal. When you saw Marilyn Manson on MTV, you dyed your hair black, put on black lipstick and started to wear band t-shirts. You learned to play guitar but could never start a band. The only real friends you had were the freaks and misfits in the gang you called The Angels. They were:

Michael: Big, not the smartest, but he always stood up for the gang. Had a problem with his temper and often started fights.

Ralph: The über nerd. D&D, Comics, superheroes, Star Wars. Always bullied but really smart. Also super nice to you.

Thomas: Imaginative, brooding, and often the one that came up with the things the gang should do. Had something that was troubling him.

Ursula: Wild and self-possessed. She could not be anything else, and you loved her for it. Loved to sing, but couldn't carry a tune in a bucket.

You haven't seen your childhood friends in many, many years. Define the relationship you had to each one of them back then. One per character.

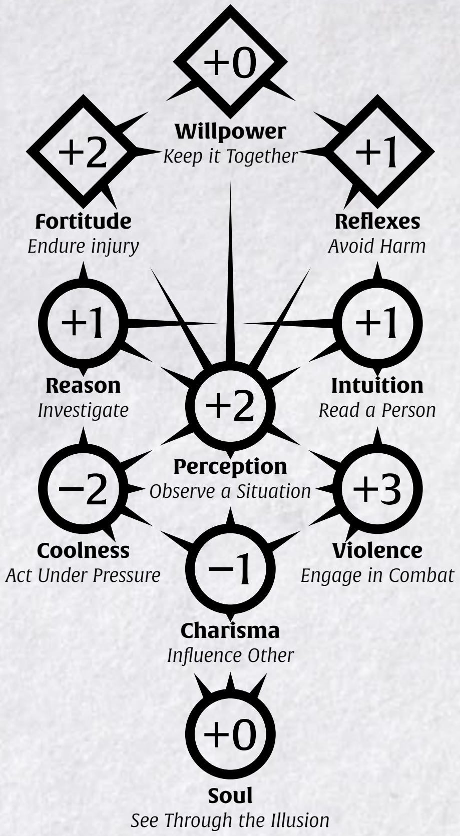
- Attracted to.
- Intimidated by.
- Many conflicts with.
- Best friend.

Things in your possession

Siouxsie and the Banshees T-Shirt. Vintage Leather Jacket. Black jeans. Doc Martens Boots. Studded belt. Smartphone. Credit card. $34 in Cash. Bass guitar in case. Pepper Spray: [–] [Distance: arm, player character rolls +Fortitude: (15+) Still capable of acting; (10–14) Dazed: −2 ongoing during this scene; (−9) The victim is subdued for this scene].

MICHAEL

Attributes



Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

■ *Composed*	
☐ *Uneasy* ☐ *Unfocused*	**Moderate stress:** −1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Shaken* ☐ *Distressed* ☐ *Neurotic*	**Serious stress:** −1 ***Keep it Together*** −2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Anxious* ☐ *Irrational* ☐ *Unhinged*	**Critical stress:** −2 ***Keep it Together*** −3 to Disadvantage rolls +1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐ *Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Who you are

You are 32 years old and work as a private security guard. You are used to night shifts with energy drinks, Youtube and nothing much happening. The standard routine is to scare off trespassers or beat up junkies or homeless people. You claim to be the guardian of order, but you know that you are just guarding the properties of corporations and rich people.

This was not your dream. You started military service but were dishonorably discharged due to some violent temper tantrums. You tried to become a police officer but again your temperament tripped you up during the application process. You live in your small studio apartment in the bad parts of town. When you aren't working out, you spend time online.

You hate to admit it but you feel lonely. Sometimes you wake up, howling in panic, reaching out for anyone or anything. Then you despise your own weakness. Relationships never last long and you have a big problem controlling your temper. It's so easy to resort to violence when confronted with a situation where you have little or no control.

Dark Secret

Your only outlet for your inner frustration is underground fighting events. These are illegal, violent affairs without rules. On two occasions, you beat your opponent so badly you gave them permanent injuries. One of them is now in a wheelchair and the other is blind in one eye. You know you should feel bad, but for some reason this gives you a rush. They knew what they were walking into, and you showed them who's boss.

Who You Were as a Kid

Getting yourself into trouble pretty much defined you. You were always stronger than you were smart and you were infamous for making rash decisions that brought down the wrath of the adult world on you and your friends. Yes, friends. Back then you had friends. Back when you had friends. A gang of misfits, you called yourselves the Angels. You were happy then. You used your strength to protect them from bullies, and in return they were there for you. You collected books and comics about World War II. You played Dungeons & Dragons and spent time outside. Your friends were:

Gabrielle: She was acting out and tried to be some sort of witch. Wore black lipstick and listened to, and played, weird music. She looked nice and could have been "normal" and popular but chose to hang with you guys.

Ralph: The nerdy kid, the Dungeon Master when you played D&D. Smart and great with computers but always picked on by bullies.

Thomas: Troubled kid that was acting out his frustration – you could relate to that. He had a great imagination and led you to do all kinds of crazy things.

Ursula: Freaky and weird, from a really bad home. She was picked on but most of the time she didn't seem to care. She had this wild quality. Just loved to be outside and howl at the world.

You haven't seen your childhood friends in many, many years. Define the relationship you had to each one of them back then. One per character.

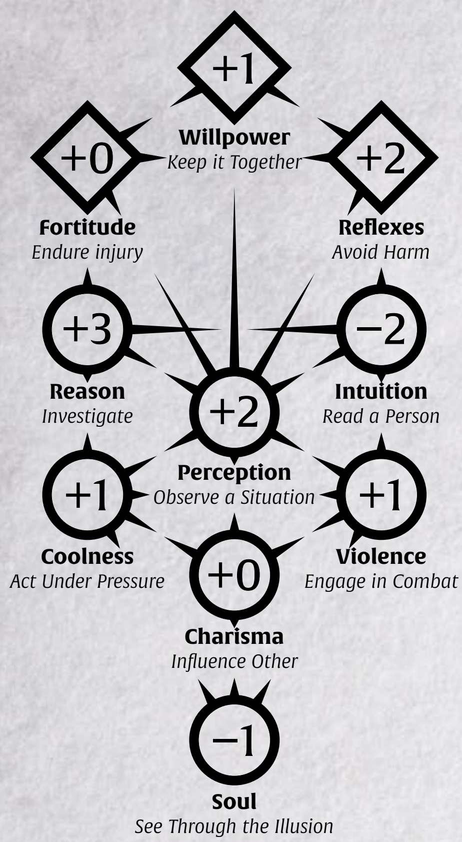
- Attracted to.
- Intimidated by.
- Many conflicts with.
- Best friend.

Things in your possession

Tight T-shirt with tribal pattern. Hoodie. Black camo pants. Sturdy boots. Raincoat. Smartphone with crack on screen. Foldable knife [2 Harm]. Wallet with $45, credit card, condom (that has been in the wallet for a long time). Keys to your car, a silver Dodge Avenger Sedan (2007).

RALPH

Attributes



Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized
☐
☐
☐
☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized
☐

Stability

■	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Who you are

You are 32 years old and single, never in a relationship. You work as a computer programmer. In your spare time, you build your own computers, design apps, or spend time gaming. You prefer to communicate via text messages.

You live in a two-room apartment and only leave it when you have to. You love to find patterns and hate it when things don't conform to your world view. You are obsessed with conspiracy theories in general and love pillaging the net for information about people and storing it in encrypted folders.

Even though you feel most at home in front of a computer screen, you feel lonely. You wish you could be more normal. Meet people for real.

Dark Secret

You hack in and steal sensitive information, pictures, and communications from people you despise, and then you blackmail them. You have done so to several bullies from your childhood and other people you feel deserve it. You want them to be scared and you want them to suffer. You have even gathered information about your childhood friends. You've not used that information in any damaging way, though. You just keep it in your folders.

Who You Were as a Kid

You were the classic nerdy boy, a thin and gangly kid who was bullied from the first day at school. You hated the bullies and resented the successful kids. You collected comics, played games and were the Dungeon Master in epic D&D campaigns together with your friends. Yes, you look back at that with fond memories. Others called you freaks but you called your gang The Angels. Your childhood friends were:

Gabrielle: Cute, gothy, girl that was just different. Great at playing guitar and singing. [*Later in life she was together with some semi-famous asshole called Jerod Warner and he was abusive towards her. But there are many photos of her from that time, dressed in a sexy way and making out with men and women at parties. You collect these pictures and look at them often*].

Michael: Big, dumb kid that couldn't control his temper. But he scared off the bullies and cared about you. [*Later in life he applied to become both a soldier and police officer but failed – now has a low income job as a security guard. Seems to be involved in some illegal fight clubs*].

Thomas: Troubled, but with a great imagination and fun to play D&D with. Often led The Angels on all kinds of crazy adventures. [*You haven't found any information about him*].

Ursula: Freaky and weird, from a rough home. Often made you laugh with her wild escapades. [*Her medical journals show a long history of psychological problems. She has prescriptions for an assortment of pills*].

You haven't seen your childhood friends in many, many years (although you have spied on them online). Define the relationship you had to each one of them back then. One per character.

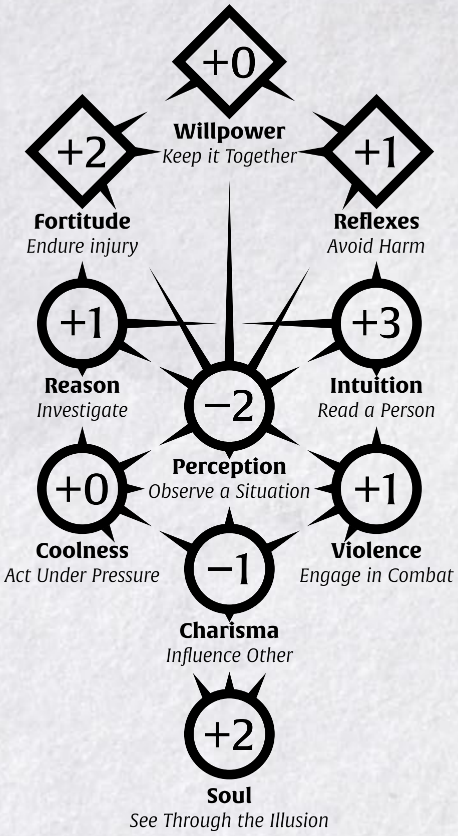
- Attracted to.
- Intimidated by.
- Many conflicts with.
- Best friend.

Things in your possession

Shirt that is buttoned all the way up. Beige chinos. Leather shoes. Fake Rolex watch (ordered from China). Practical, but expensive, jacket. Umbrella. Leather bag for your laptop. Modern smartphone (with all the gathered info about your childhood friends on it). Stainless steel credit card holder. Credit cards.

URSULA

Attributes



Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐

☐

☐

☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐

Stability

■ *Composed*	
☐ *Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐ *Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐ *Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐ *Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
	+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐ *Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Who you are

You are 32 years old. You work as a welder and are good at repairing things. You've a hard time keeping both relationships and jobs for a long time, but you often find odd jobs at the dockyards and warehouses in the city – and temporary relationships at the bars and clubs.

Your life is miserable. You don't feel at home in the city but you can't leave it. You clash with bosses and colleagues. You are an outcast, because you don't know what else to be. You seem to be at odds with everything, changing the color of your hair as often as you change your opinions. Your apartment is a mess and you are behind on rent even though you have the money.

You're slipping and you know it. You wish there was a way out. You're looking for hope and stability, but you are your own worst enemy. You wish you had a friend that could set you straight – or at least help you see clearly. You want a friend to be there so you don't have to be strong all the time.

Dark Secret

You have several comorbid disorders, most of them from childhood trauma. Symptoms include dissociation, mood swings, extreme anxiety, impulsivity, and occasional violent outbursts. You can control these with medication and routine, but whenever your sense of stability is threatened, you begin to spiral.

Who You Were as a Kid

You grew up in a small town in a working-class immigrant family. It was a rough upbringing and you did not do well at school. You were bullied by the other kids, and most of the time you just let it happen. You hated to be home as a kid – instead you loved being out in nature. It was heaven building tree houses, swimming in the lake, and biking around with your friends on countless adventures. Friends, yes. Back then you had real friends. People you could talk to and that did not judge. You called yourself the Angels but the others called you the Freaks. Your friends were:

Gabrielle: She was great at playing music. You often talked about starting a band together. You and Gabrielle used to laugh about how you couldn't carry a tune, even though you loved to sing.

Michael: Big and strong, angry like you, but he let it out. Often got into trouble.

Ralph: Smart and nerdy. Loved role playing games and comics. Was often picked on.

Thomas: He hated his home just much as you did. Often was the one that came up with all the cool adventures.

You haven't seen your childhood friends in many, many years. Define the relationship you had to each one of them back then. One per character.

- Attracted to.
- Intimidated by.
- Many conflicts with.
- Best friend.

Things in your possession

A mixed assortment of clothing from the Salvation Army. Several necklaces. A raincoat bought from a military surplus store. Steel-toed boots. Pill box with pills (the important medicines). Cigarette lighter. Cigarettes. Chewing gum. Hip flask with vodka. $382 in cash. Old Nokia cell phone.

Devonsport

THE SHUNNED

On the surface it may seem like nothing has changed. People still go about their business, go to the mall, to the gym and to work. But if you look closer you can see it: the fear. It is in every sideways look, in every turning of a corner, in every unspoken word and in every hug that feels like it could be the last.

The school shooting came like a shock; so many dead, so much guilt and pain, but at the same time it was almost expected somehow, like the weight of past sins had finally reached the present.

When the black vans of the feds rolled out of town, many thought it was finally over. That they could begin to forget and to heal. They couldn't have been more wrong; It was only the beginning.

THE POWER STRUGGLE

For the better part of a century, the small port town of Devonsport has been at the mercy of a ruthless lictor of Yesod. Her current guise is that of corporate CEO Jessica Inzeo, but in the past she has taken the form of bank managers, investors, and politicians. She rules with an iron hand and maintains the Illusion through exploiting the natural greed of humanity. Her grip on Devonsport is strong, but in the last few years she has become complacent and failed to see the changes happening all across her domain.

In the early 1900s, the lictor came into power as her shrewd land deals concentrated wealth in the area. To attain her position she bribed, blackmailed, and intimidated anyone she could, but did not hesitate to kill the ones she couldn't. One of the strongest opponents of this newfound wealth and so-called progress was the owner and madame of the local brothel, Grace Rea. Grace didn't mind money coming into town, but she quickly found herself and everyone she cared about shunned and outcast. One night, her brothel was set on fire. The doors and windows had been nailed shut, leaving everyone to burn alive. Grace herself was left badly disfigured by the flames, but she somehow managed to survive. For two weeks, she stumbled across town asking for help, but the town gave her none. Her hatred and anger grew stronger, and with her dying breath she cursed the arsonists, damning them to vicious punishments.

Grace's loneliness and desire for revenge landed her in the torture cells beneath Sathariel's citadel. Slowly, step by tiny step, she gained the favor of a servant of the Death Angel. Once tortured, she became the torturer. Now, seventy-five years later, she has completed her transformation into a nepharite of Sathariel, beautiful and terrible. With her desire for vengeance stronger than ever, Grace decided to return to Elysium to fulfill her promise: destroy the lictor that took her life and claim Devonsport.

Over the last five years, she has gained more and more influence over Devonsport. Outcasts, homeless, bullied kids, junkies, and war veterans have all become her tools.

The shooting at the local high school is just the latest in a long chain of events that she has orchestrated. It is the penultimate step before Grace crosses into our world, and pulls the lictor into her purgatory to be tortured for what she hopes will be eternity.

If Grace has her way, the veil between Elysium and Inferno will fall for a single night. Purgatides and other malevolent creatures of Inferno will haunt the small town while Grace exacts her revenge.

Eric Switzer

Eric was a lost young man that Grace managed to reach with her Infernal whispers. Trapped in a loveless marriage, Eric's mother Eva had an extramarital affair with the police chief Dwayne McLean that, unfortunately, left her pregnant. Growing up with parents who treated him like a nuisance left its mark on Eric. He was exceptionally talented, but also extremely sensitive to criticism and bore an inflated sense of self-worth.

At school Eric scorned his fellow students, who he saw as less intelligent and enlightened than him. He started to resent everyone around him. He knew that he was better than all of them and that they deserved to die.

Frank Dubois, a science teacher and a pillar of Devonsport community, took an interest in Eric. Frank's passion project was to ensure that the students of Devonsport were placed at the top of the Science Olympiad in Seattle. He was a strict teacher; anyone who could perform was deemed worthy of his attention, the rest he ignored or even actively harassed. He noticed Eric's intelligence and made attempts to recruit him, but Eric didn't want to get involved with the conservative Frank and his pack of Science Olympiad students.

Frank, irritated by the rejection, kept an eye on Eric. Much to his concern, he started to see signs of something dark and disturbing growing within the boy. It was as though a shadow clung to his back. A black, burned, female figure started to appear next to Eric whenever Frank observed him from the corner of his eye.

Then the dreams started. Dreams where Eric murdered other students, dreams where Devonsport was pulled into darkness and blood. In these dreams, Eric painted a symbol with blood in the town square and it burned into reality like a scar. Though Frank considered himself a man of science, he was also raised in the conservative evangelical parts of Washington state, and developed a bone-deep terror that Eric had somehow become a tool of the devil. If Frank didn't do something, Devonsport would suffer.

In a desperate gambit, Frank managed to drug Eric and put him in his car. He could not force himself to strangle the child-demon as he first intended. In a panic, he drove Eric deep into the woods, pushed him out, and left him there without outerwear or a phone. It was the middle of winter.

When Eric came to, he found himself lost, afraid, and weak. This was the first time Grace spoke to him. She promised to guide him in the ways of vengeance, took his hand, and led him back to Devonsport.

When Frank heard about Eric's return, he became more convinced than ever that Eric was a child of the devil and would bring about the downfall of Devonsport. He feared that he would be reported, but it never happened. Eric was playing the long game and knew his revenge would come one day.

As soon as he was able to, Eric moved to Seattle to work with computers. He found a good job at a big company but didn't really fit in. He was sure that his colleagues talked behind his back, and any friendly overture seemed to be a prelude to fucking him over. He spent most of his time alone, playing games and discussing conspiracy theories on 4Chan and other forums.

It was in this state of hateful isolation and self-loathing that Eric, walking home from work, had his fateful meeting with Frank Dubois and his new favorite student, Patrick Wilson. It was almost as if someone had orchestrated their encounter.

Frank and Patrick were in town for an award ceremony; Patrick had placed in the state-level Science Olympiad. Frank froze in terror when he saw Eric come walking down the road. He tried to pull Patrick away, but Eric had seen them and approached quietly. After what felt like an eternity of silence, Frank tried to take control of the situation and introduced Patrick as his star student. Frank insisted he was happy to see Eric again, but the cheer in his voice rang hollow. A smile spread across Eric's face as he walked off. The time had come. Grace's whispers had turned to screams, and he now knew how he would have his revenge.

Grace granted him the power to create his own purgatory: a virtual equivalent of Devonsport High School and its immediate surroundings. Here, he would be able to get his revenge on all those that had, in his mind, wronged him. To Grace, his purgatory is the gate through which she will enter Elysium. Eric worked day and night for six months on his creation, losing his job, his sanity, and finally his life. As he died, he took possession of Patrick Wilson and shot up Devonsport High School.

The Shunned And The Ritual

Around the same time that Eric started work on his creation, Grace began influencing others that already had started to doubt and sometimes already acted according to her will without knowing it.

The effect of the school shooting made it possible for Grace to finally speak directly to those outcast young people she had started to manipulate months ago. She showed them the path forward. This group, called The Shunned, is now a cult under her will. Secretly, they have started the preparation of a ritual that will open the gates to Inferno and empower Grace when she steps through into Elysium.

See Act 3 for more details regarding The Shunned.

Overview

This scenario plays out over four acts, detailed below and in later sections.

Act 0 – Player Introduction: The player characters meet one another and receive their mission.

Act 1 – Investigation: The player characters investigate what happened before and during the school shooting. This act ends when they find Eric Switzer.

Act 2 – Purgatory: The player characters enter the nightmare demi-plane created for Eric Switzer and experience his suffering. They also uncover more truths.

Act 3 – Inferno: The player characters return to Devonsport for the endgame: the culmination of the power struggle between Grace, a nepharite of Sathariel, and Jessica Inzeo, a lictor of Yesod. Which side will they take? Whatever choice they make will have severe consequences for them, and the town of Devonsport.

Main Themes

This scenario is about the power struggle between Grace, a nepharite of Sathariel, and Jessica Inzeo, a lictor of Yesod. The scenario has two main themes:

Revenge: Grace seeks revenge not only against Jessica but also the whole population of Devonsport for turning their backs on her and casting her out. Eric felt betrayed by society and decided to take his revenge on the school and the teacher who had tried to kill him. The Shunned are outcasts who want to tear down a society that they feel has no place for them.

Entitlement: Although pleasant looking on the surface, Devonsport is a corrupt and rotten society. This has to do with a sense of entitlement. The cops take bribes, the mayor is corrupt, and everyone looks the other way, but they all feel it is for the greater good. The Shunned feel that their roles as outcasts give them the right to tear down society around them, and Eric felt that he could justify killing the children that went to his former school.

THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

For some time now, Jessica Inzeo has suspected that something isn't right, and the school shooting confirmed her suspicions. She is not certain about the nature of the threat, but she senses it could topple her power.

Because of the delicate nature of this situation, Jessica has decided to launch her own investigation. This is where the player characters come in.

Hired by Jessica Inzeo via her proxy, Mayor Phillip Dapperton, the player characters have been recruited to conduct an investigation into what really happened before, during and after, the school shooting. No clue is to be ignored regardless of how far-fetched it may seem.

Of course, no one can know that either mayor Dapperton or Jessica Inzeo are involved, which is why discretion is of utmost importance. Jessica Inzeo can, under no circumstances, be publicly outed as controlling the affairs of Devonsport.

Sylvia, James and Dwayne have been personally selected by Jessica Inzeo whereas Toby was selected by Mayor Dapperton.

In addition to the information found here, which is for the GM only, the character sheets in the end of the scenario contain player information and attributes of each of the player characters. It is recommended that the GM also reads it to get a better understanding of each character in the scenario.

Give a short description of each character for the players; who they are without giving away too much, and let them pick the one they want to play.

DWAYNE MCLEAN, CORRUPT POLICE CHIEF

Dwayne is Eric Switzer's biological father.

Dark Secret: Jessica Inzeo has video evidence of the night Dwayne killed Erin Fuller. She will publish this footage if he refuses to participate in the investigation.

Purpose In The Investigation: Dwayne, as chief of police, has full access to police records – including forensic reports and witness statements. He can also influence the local police department even though he is no longer in charge of everyday operations.

JAMES MARRA, NOSY PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

James' brother Bill will be one of the kidnapping victims. See Act 3 – The Victims for more details.

Dark Secret: James is a voyeur. He likes to watch people, and lately he especially likes to watch Mayor Dapperton's teenage daughter. Whenever you can, use her to make James uncertain whether she knows that he is watching.

Purpose In The Investigation: Jessica knows that James has few scruples and will do almost anything for money. His skills with computers and surveillance will be very useful for completing this investigation.

TOBY HOIVOK, BROKEN IRAQI WAR VETERAN

Toby's younger brother Ken is the leader of The Shunned, a group that serves Grace.

Dark Secret: When Grace started influencing this world, she saw great potential in both Toby and his brother Ken. She wanted to recruit them both to be in The Shunned, but while she could push Toby to murderous rage, she could not control him. Ken was pliable, so she selected him to lead The Shunned, but Toby is still her wildcard. She believes she can push him to the same state again if need be.

Since that night, Toby still carries her mark. This means that any of Grace's servants or allies will recognize him as an ally and will not attack unless provoked.

Whenever Toby fails to ***Keep it Together***, he experiences flashbacks to the night he pulled two truckers out of their trucks and killed them with his bare hands.

Examples of flashbacks:

- *Opening the door of a truck and throwing the driver out on the ground, then leaping on top of him.*
- *Grabbing a victim's throat and crushing it, blood spurting out.*
- *Breaking an arm at the elbow, then ripping it from its socket.*
- *A dark shape watching him from the edge of the woods.*
- *A beautiful dark-haired woman walking into his room while he is passed out drunk on his bed. She leans over to kiss him and he wakes up coughing from the smell of smoke and ashes.*

Purpose In The Investigation: As a rare sign of resisting Jessica Inzeo, Mayor Dapperton adds Toby as his inside man in the investigation in the hope that Toby will provide him information that Jessica doesn't have.

SYLVIA SPEERS, RUTHLESS CORPORATE LAWYER

Sylvia's grandson, Henry Speers, died during the school shooting. She harbors thoughts of revenge towards the Wilsons, who she sees as responsible for the acts of their son.

Dark Secret: Sylvia Speers suffers from schizophrenia, which occasionally grants her strange and detailed hallucinations. Until recently, this illness was kept almost completely under control by medication, therapy and an extreme dedication to her work. Lately, however, these bulwarks seem to be eroding.

In the last few months, Sylvia's hallucinations have changed character somewhat. They used to be of large dark cityscapes with mazes of rooms, corridors, and machinery, beneath a black and clouded sky. But now, they are more of a suffocating mist, the screams of suffering children, and the ever-present smell of blood.

Throughout the scenario, Sylvia should experience hallucinations of varying severity. Schizophrenia is a real condition, so GM and players should take care to play it respectfully. All hallucinations should be interesting, but not render Sylvia's player helpless to do anything. Since hallucinations in *KULT: Divinity Lost* are often visions of other worlds, Sylvia may be seeing more of the "real world" than the other player characters. Keep these things in mind.

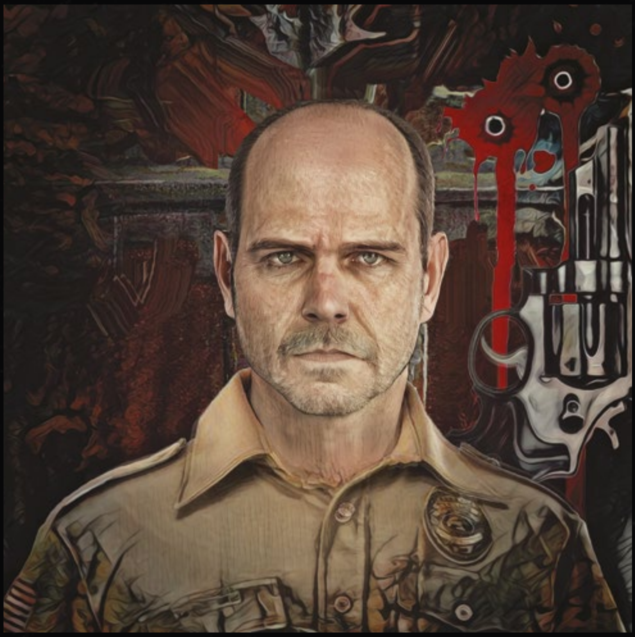
Examples of hallucinations:

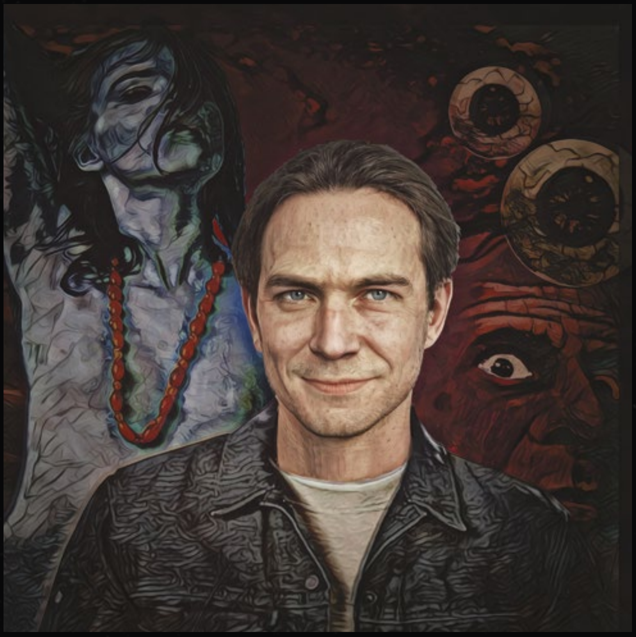
- *While watching surveillance footage, Sylvia sees her grandson Henry being shot over and over again.*
- *When walking out of a room, Sylvia finds herself in a corridor that stretches on forever. On both sides are cell doors with small windows. No matter which window she peeks in, she sees herself suffering in a psychiatric ward.*
- *To Sylvia, the walls are no longer walls, but tall men standing shoulder to shoulder. Behind them, a fire burns. The stench of burning flesh and the sound of screams permeate everything. As the fire reaches the men, they scream.*
- *Sylvia suddenly feels herself falling, and as she looks down, she's rushing towards a vast and dimly lit cityscape.*

Purpose In The Investigation: Jessica Inzeo picked Sylvia for a number of reasons. Sylvia is loyal and she can talk almost anyone down. She is also ruthless and will stop at nothing to complete a given task. In addition, she's not been herself lately so if she dies during the investigation, it's not a great loss for the corporation.

Establishing Scenes

The scenes below can be used as short snippets before the scenario starts to show a bit of Devonsport before the shooting, give an idea of when the players characters may have run into each other, and establish where they were when the shooting took place. Feel free to remove scenes you don't think fit, add new ones, or ask if the players would like to play out some establishing scenes they have in mind. The scenes should be short, so feel free to cut them whenever it feels fitting. Jump between the players, let them explore their characters, and lead it up to the final establishing scene which is the school shooting. These scenes can also be used as flashbacks throughout the scenario.





DWAYNE MCLEAN SCENES

Meeting Jessica Inzeo (Dark Secret): 10 years ago: Dwayne meets the powerful business woman Jessica Inzeo at her modern office in downtown Devonsport. She explains that a journalist, Erin Fuller, is making trouble and needs to be convinced to leave Devonsport. The scene ends when Dwayne accepts an envelope filled with money. This scene is tied to Dwayne's dark secret and it establishes that he accepted the money, but the GM should use this scene to establish Jessica Inzeo and how her company changes the shape of Devonsport. Ask the player what made Dwayne accept the money.

Carol's Confession (Family): 6 months ago. Dwayne's daughter, Carol, is coming over. They are going to have dinner at his place. Ask the player to describe the home and what he has prepared for dinner. Carol comes directly from work, in her police uniform. She is distressed and soon breaks down into tears. Her sobs are only interrupted by utterings of "I can't do this anymore" over and over. Once she calms down, she confesses that she has a hard time dealing with the corruption among her colleagues. She has even had thoughts of suicide because she feels so trapped by the corruption and greed that infests Devonsport. She says something has to change, and that when mom died it felt like all that was good in Devonsport died with her.

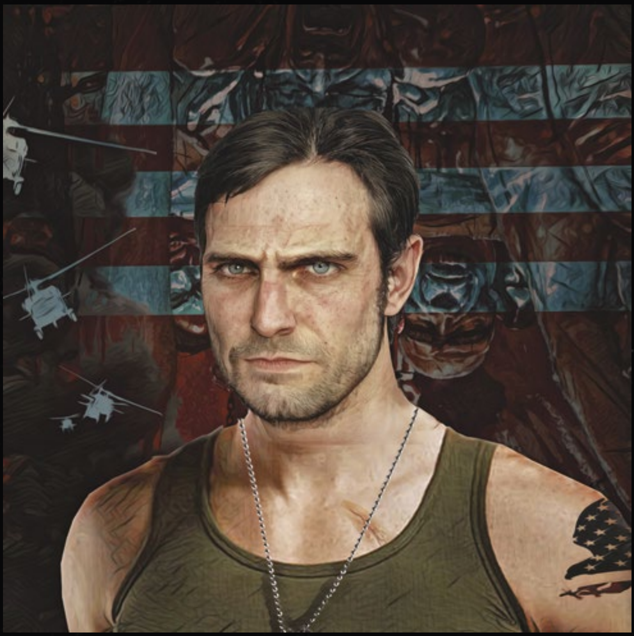
The School Shooting: 5 weeks ago. It's around nine in the morning, October 23rd. Dwayne has taken his patrol car to his favorite spot some miles outside Devonsport. This is a place where he goes to be alone, and where he used to go with his wife Susan before cancer took her. Ask the player to describe the spot, as well as a memory of Susan. Suddenly there's a panicked message on the police radio. There is an active shooter at Devonsport High School. As Dwayne races to the scene, describe the landscape surrounding Devonsport. Cut the scene when he drives up to the school.

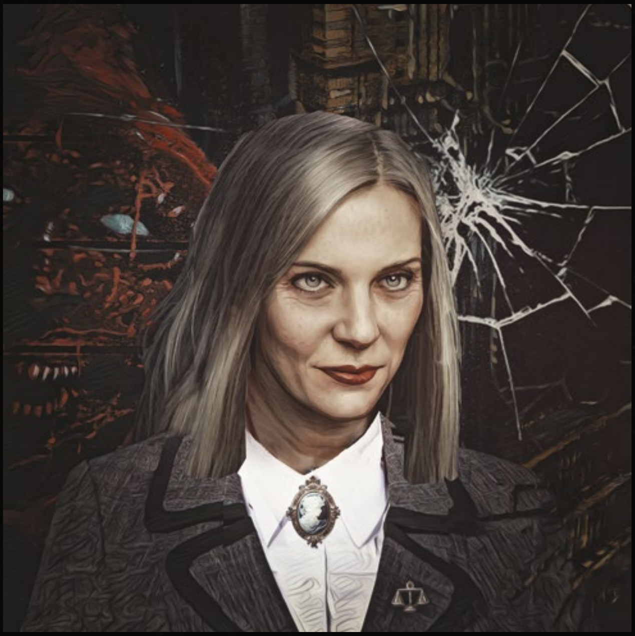
JAMES MARRA SCENES

Caught in the Act (Dark Secret): 3 months ago: James has been contracted by the mayor to install a new security system for the house. He is crouched down and installing one of the private hidden cameras inside Ashley Dapperton's room so that he can spy on her. Ask the player what it is about her that makes her so mesmerizing to James. Suddenly James hears a voice from behind: "What are you doing in here?". It's Ashley Dapperton, standing in the doorway. She has one eye on James and the other on her phone. Play out the scene to see how James acts with her.

Hanging out with Bill (Family): 2 month ago. James and his brother, Bill, watch a movie and drink beers at James' place. Ask the player to describe James' home and what movie they are watching. Bill speaks about how he really likes Devonsport, and this is the first place that feels like home. He then brings up Jessica Inzeo and how she is a bad influence on the town. Something is rotten about her. End the scene when Bill goes to the bathroom.

The School Shooting: 5 weeks ago, and the school shooting in Devonsport is all over the news. TV crews from Seattle have already arrived and all the major news outlets are reporting on it. Ashley Dapperton attends the school, and the list of victims has not yet been released. James is sitting at the computer, looking between the Dapperton cameras and updates on the news. How does he feel about the shooting, not just regarding Ashley, but that it's happening here in the small town of Devonsport? Finally, through a contact in the Police, he gets the news. Ashley Dapperton is alive (and a witness), but her boyfriend Patrick Wilson is believed to be the shooter and was killed by the police.





TOBY HOIVOK SCENES

Brutal Awakening (Dark Secret): Five years ago: a year after returning from the war, Toby awakes in his bed. It's late in the afternoon. Let the player describe the place Toby wakes up in. His head is pounding and he is covered in blood. Toby has vague memories of a truck stop, screams, and the feeling of ripping a body apart. He feels the need to vomit. When he does, he throws up chunks of raw meat and streaks of blood. The scene ends when he sees a reflection of a burned woman in the mirror.

Farewell to his Brother (Family): 4 months ago, Toby and Ken are out camping. It is night, they have raised their tent, made a huge fire, and drunk plenty of beer. The wind is in the trees, and from the distance they hear the crashing of the waves. Ken seems better than he has in years. His eyes shine with life and a purpose. He says he has finally found a reason to live. He is very emotional, and the conversation feels like a farewell. He talks about the war and how the world seems just as rotten here at home. It is late, they are drunk and tired. When Toby wakes in the morning, Ken is gone. He hasn't seen his brother since.

The School Shooting: 5 weeks ago, and it is the evening of the shooting. Toby is in a local bar. The atmosphere is grim. Men look down into their glasses, stunned that something like this could have happened here. On the TV, all news seems to be about the Devonsport High shooting. Photos of Patrick Wilson are plastered across every station. Another customer turns to Toby and wonders, drunkenly: "What makes someone do something like this? What makes someone snap?" The bartender gives Toby a drink on the house and mutters: "Devonsport will never be the same after this."

SYLVIA SPEERS SCENES

Playing with Henry (Family): 5 years ago: it's a beautiful autumn afternoon. The leaves are all yellow and red and the setting sun paints the sky pink and purple. Sylvia is in the backyard of her son Richard's house. She is pushing Henry, her grandson, in the swing as he laughs and asks to go higher. He says that she is the best grandma ever! Cut the scene when Kari shouts from the back door that food is ready.

Nightmares in Reality (Dark Secret): 5 months ago, Sylvia is in her home and is working late into the night to prepare a lawsuit. Let the player describe how she lives. Suddenly, there is a loud knocking at the front door. If she answers, there is no one there, but a thick mist has crept in. She can see shapes moving closer, and then she hears a crash. They are in the house. A burning red moon in the sky turns the mist to blood. It feels like she and all of Devonsport are drowning in it. Suddenly, she has the pills in her hand. The vision fades away.

The School Shooting: 5 weeks ago, Sylvia is in the offices of Inzeo Construction. Jessica Inzeo is holding a presentation regarding potential investors for new luxury homes. Sylvia's phone is ringing; she has forgotten to turn it off. It is Richard. She will get a sharp look from Jessica. If she dismisses the call, the meeting will continue and Jessica tells her to get the legal papers prepared. When Richard finally reaches her, she can hear that he is crying. "There was a shooting at the school. Henry... Henry is dead."

Scenes between the player characters

Feel free to create some scenes between the characters if you want them to have established relationships before the game begins. Let the players play the scenes out and feel free to cut in the middle if the dialogue gets too long.

DEVONSPORT

Devonsport is a small town on the Pacific Coast in the state of Washington with a population of 9717. The majority of residents live in large, expensive houses which are located on the cliffs overlooking the ocean. Many of the affluent inhabitants work in Seattle, but have settled here to raise families in a quiet and safe coastal town.

Devonsport is largely white, but there are some wealthy minorities here as well. Anyone who adapts to the established order and desires wealth above all else is welcome in Devonsport.

Money brings power, and power brings corruption. On the surface, this town is safe and tranquil, but beneath the surface hides a darker reality. Corrupt politicians sell land rights to drilling and mining corporations. Managers at big companies break up any hope of their employees unionizing. Children who grow up in Devonsport are repressed at best and traumatized at worst.

There is a clear divide between the have and have-nots, those inside the system and those who have fallen outside. You are either part of the machinery that makes Devonsport run, or you are not. If you are not part of the greed and the scramble for more materialistic possessions, Devonsport makes your life hard. You will be treated like a leper. Strangers will not speak to you in the streets. You'll struggle to open a bank account, the hospital might suddenly deny you care, and the police will constantly harass you. In effect, the high-school bullying and pettiness never ends.

The center of town used to be a single quaint road with small cafes, restaurants and a cinema. Now, a large shopping mall is under construction and two large glass-covered office buildings tower over the landscape. Both office buildings belong to large multinational corporations. Some residents complain about these new constructions, but the complaints can hardly be heard over the deafening roar of the money machine.

It is up to the GM how much she wants to play out, and on which side the player characters find themselves. To make the offers from Grace (see Act 2 – Purgatory) interesting, the player characters must be interested in breaking the established order, whether for personal reasons or for the better of all of Devonsport.

Devonsport High School

Located within walking distance of the city center, Devonsport High School has a total of 350 students.

The school is well funded and ranks extremely high according to national standards. Teachers are well paid and take pride in their work.

There is a dark side to this school, however, something that all educational institutions have to some extent: the inability to accept differences. Anyone who stands out, like Eric Switzer, will be teased and harassed by fellow students.

Jerome Wade

Principal Jerome Wade has been in charge of the school for the last 15 years. He comes from a military family and accepts neither tardiness nor individuality. In his mind, he has the best interest of the students at heart, but in reality he is just attempting to impose rigid discipline and control for his own pleasure.

Frank Dubois

Frank Dubois, now deceased, was one of the longest serving teachers at the school. A great teacher in some ways, he commanded the full attention of his students and encouraged students who showed promise in the sciences. Patrick Wilson was one of those students. He also tried to kill Eric Switzer, but failed. He was the only target specifically chosen by Eric during the shooting.

Abigail Grant

A recent addition to the workforce is Abigail Grant from Los Angeles. She joined the school as a social studies teacher, hoping to share her love of history and languages with her charges. Because she is deeply progressive, she doesn't fit in very well. She has already suffered a number of inappropriate sexual advances from Jerome Wade – not out of lust, on his part, but as an attempt to control her or push her out of the school. She brought the issue to the attention of the police, but they're not interested in helping this young upstart.

Mrs. Horrigan

One of the oldest teachers at the school, Mrs. Horrigan has adapted to the uncomfortable situation created by the bullying. She teaches history and often finds herself escaping into books and old movies to not have to deal with life.

For more details about how she can connect the player characters to Eric Switzer, see Act 1 – Interviewing Witnesses.

BULLYING

Anyone who stands out, no matter how little, suffers an amount of bullying from the citizens of the town. This behavior is so normalized in Devonsport that no one pays attention to it anymore.

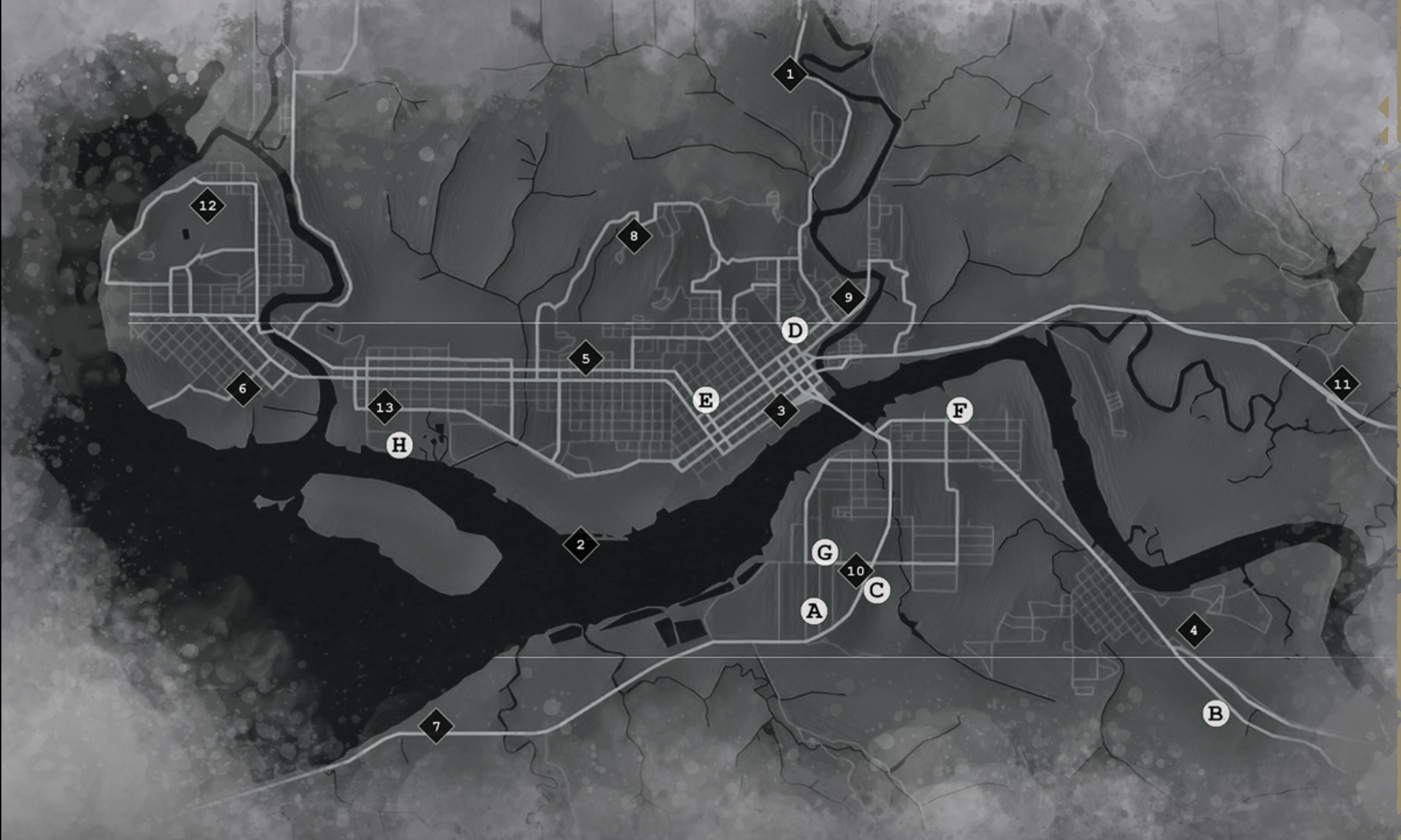
Parents who try to report any incidents suddenly find themselves swarmed with unrelated lawsuits and threats to their jobs. While none of these are explicitly linked to their complaints, most adults wise up sooner rather than later. Many parents withdraw their reports instead of suffering the consequences. Some move out of town entirely.

If the player characters investigate what happens to bullied children, this leads them to some of The Shunned. They all stood out and have all suffered for it. Their parents are reluctant to talk, but can be convinced to do so with bribes and promises of anonymity. Mostly, parents now blame their traumatized children instead of looking at the systemic issues in Devonsport.

Devonsport Police Department

Devonsport has three full-time police officers and a semi-retired police chief in player character Dwayne McLean. Most police officers on the force are corrupted by Jessica Inzeo.

For the most part, Devonsport has traditionally been a safe and quiet town. The cops mostly deal with minor traffic violations and the occasional graffiti. Any actual crimes – such as the rampant child abuse – go largely unaddressed.



LOCATIONS IN DEVONSPORT

A. Devonsport High School

B. Briefing Motel

C. Wilson's House

D. Police Department

E. Inzeo Construction Offices

F. Frank Dubois' House

G. Switzer's House

H. Brothel Location

RITUAL VICTIM LOCATIONS

1. Andrew Miller
2. Scott Knell
3. Tracey Rossner
4. Katie Lombardo
5. Bill Marra
6. Jerome Wade
7. Alan Williams
8. Matt Lehmer
9. Joan Borden
10. Russ Belsky
11. Paulina Cranford
12. Robert Bricks
13. Philip Dapperton

According to the police, violence has ramped up in the last few years. They insist it's from "urban gangsters" and "environmental terrorists", all of whom have come from Seattle.

DWAYNE MCLEAN, SEMI-RETIRED CHIEF OF POLICE

Dwayne is one of the player characters. He is currently semi-retired and works as much as he wants – this is so his player can decide how involved he is with the department.

PETER COX, DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE

Peter Cox is in his forties and a lifelong resident of Devonsport. Being second-in-command came to Peter through years of service rather than investigative skills. Since Chief McLean is now mostly retired, the deputy chief is normally the person in charge at the police station. He has taken up the mantle from Dwayne in more than one way and receives monthly payments from Inzeo to make sure any troublesome complaints or investigations disappear.

BRENT MEYER, DEPUTY

A young and ambitious police officer who graduated from the Seattle academy last year, Brent Meyer sees his time in Devonsport as a stepping stone to greater things. Brent is easy to lead around with promises of rewards, and there's little he won't do for a commendation. He also enjoys harassing local residents by giving them fines for minor infractions, and he loves a good "stop and frisk" when things are slow.

CAROL MCLEAN, DEPUTY

Chief McLean's daughter stands well on her own merits. She shares the same keen mind and perception as her father, and is in good health. She is ambitious and wants to move somewhere where the job is more interesting, but her loyalty to her father and family keeps her in Devonsport. She is troubled by the corruption within the police department, but knows that she needs to keep her silence if she wants to keep her job and to ensure the safety of her family.

Jessica Inzeo, CEO Of Inzeo Construction

Jessica Inzeo is one of the main NPCs in this scenario. Officially, she is the CEO, founder, and majority shareholder of Inzeo Construction, a company that specializes in high-end houses and apartments. They have hundreds of millions of dollars at stake in a new luxury neighborhood south of the town center.

Jessica is a cold and distant woman who only cares about the profits of her company. She is a lictor of Yesod who rules this small part of the Illusion with an iron fist. Very rarely does anyone catch a glimpse of anything beyond Elysium on her watch.

She hired the player characters to investigate the school shooting because she suspects something beyond our world is behind it.

Jessica is always accompanied by at least one of her three bodyguards.

For her attributes, and those of her bodyguards, as well as details about her role in this scenario, see Act 3 – Inferno.

Phillip Dapperton, Mayor Of Devonsport

Phillip Dapperton is the mayor of Devonsport. He is not an evil man, but he is deep in the pockets of Inzeo Construction. He's seen Jessica's true form once and fears her more than anything. Jessica delights in his fear, but also pays him truly startling amounts of money to keep his loyalty. Phillip, therefore, never questions her motives, and almost never does anything other than what she tells him.

Mayor Dapperton is busy reassuring various investors that the town hasn't changed since the shooting, and reminding them of the potential of such a beautiful seaside spot. Apart from keeping tabs on the player characters and their investigation, this is what he spends his days doing. Mayor Dapperton has been tasked with briefing the player characters about their investigation, initially making sure to keep them away from any contact with Jessica.

NOSY PLAYER CHARACTERS

Even early on in the scenario, it's likely that the player characters will question the motives behind the investigation and want to find out why they have been hired. Jessica Inzeo will meet with them, but sees no reason to justify why she started the investigation.

Jessica will blackmail them with their dark secrets if they are not being obedient or, if she's really fed up, have them killed. There are always more people to take their place. Jessica does not take lightly to disloyalty.

ACT 0 – PLAYER INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

Devonsport is a small town in Washington state. Many of the residents are wealthy businesspeople from Seattle, looking for a quiet place to raise their children. The town itself is a cluster of expensive homes that stretch from Nelson Heights on the Pacific coast to Southmount on the Grey River.

Deep woods filled with wildlife line the river valley and stretch for many miles in all directions. Money from big construction companies has been pouring into the town over the last 15 years. Lands previously protected by environmental laws have been sold off to the highest bidder. In the town center, where there used to be picturesque cafes and book stores, now modern buildings with glass facades are being constructed.

Five weeks ago, a terrifying attack overshadowed everything else in town. A student by the name of Patrick Wilson entered the local high school with a high-powered automatic rifle and killed dozens of his schoolmates before he was shot dead by the local police department. The whole town is still in shock, reeling from such a horrific and unprecedented event. The FBI completed a quick and professional investigation. To them it was an easy case with few loose ends, but for all the residents of Devonsport everything feels like a loose end, with one question louder than all others: Why did he do it?

What drove Patrick Wilson to become a mass murderer?

The Briefing

See each character sheet for details on how each player character was contacted. Once contacted, the player characters meet in a motel conference room.

It's hot in here. The heaters are at full blast, making the air warm and stifling. The walls are dirty, the table is covered with old coffee stains, and the whole place smells of mold and humidity.

Let the players describe their characters and their manner of arrival. Did they get there early? Late? Just on time? How do they feel about seeing each other there?

Phillip Dapperton, the mayor, arrives about 15-20 minutes after the agreed-upon time. He is accompanied by one of his secretaries.

He begins:

"Good afternoon. I won't make any introductions. You all know who I am and I know who you are."

He offers a tired smile, clears his throat, and continues. He seems uncharacteristically incoherent and mumbling. Under his bloodshot eyes are dark circles and he blinks incessantly. His suit is wrinkled and his tie is askew.

"She… I, rather, want you to find out the truth about the horrific shooting at our high school. We have frankly given up faith in the usual authorities – begging your pardon, Chief McLean – and need a few fresh sets of eyes. That's where you come in."

"Each of you has been selected for your skills or position. Chief here..."

He points at Chief McLean.

"... will give you access to any official police records. Interview the witnesses, read the reports, and move on from there. We all know that the person who hired you, when she... err.... they... err... yeah... anyway... wants something, she will use any means necessary to find it. You must do the same. And... don't fail."

"Any questions?"

"Oh, and it's very important that you don't leave any stone unturned, so to speak... follow up on all leads, however... well, unlikely they may seem."

Mayor Dapperton can answer some questions, but he doesn't really know what Jessica Inzeo expects them to find. He can't answer any difficult questions regarding Inzeo Construction and why they have hired the player characters. He is Jessica's mouthpiece here and has not been fully initiated into the plan.

After a few minutes of questions, he says:

"Guess that's it. Oh... wait... your advance..."

His secretary opens a locked suitcase and passes five fat envelopes across the table to the player characters.

"Toby, you have my number. Share it with the others. Please contact me when you have something".

PAYMENT

Each of the player characters will be paid different amounts. Phillip pays Toby the least, due to getting Toby out of several tight spots already, but they are all getting well paid for this job. The advance given at the meeting was only 25% of the total sum. The rest will be paid on completion.

Act 1 – Investigation

For the most part, the school shooting investigation will be almost mundane, with some small supernatural elements hinting at what is to come. Try to build the tension and increase the horror step by step as the player characters start understanding that things don't add up. Not until the player characters have located Eric Switzer does the Illusion break down.

The Shooting

Below is a walk-through of what happened during the day of the shooting, from Patrick's mother waking him to the police shooting him dead at Devonsport High. The player characters can follow this timeline by reading witness statements and watching CCTV footage.

All events below took place on Thursday, October 23, 2014.

This information should not be repeated verbatim to the players. Have them interview witnesses and watch surveillance tapes to figure it out.

07:00 – 07:45

As Seen By Witnesses

Clara Wilson wakes up her son, Patrick Wilson.

Patrick, his mother, and his younger sister Elisabeth have breakfast together at the kitchen table.

Around 7:40 or so Patrick smiles uncharacteristically, rubs his hands together, and says something like: "Time to get to work!"

His sister Elisabeth insists she saw someone else smile through Patrick's face. She did not tell the police initially, but will tell one of the player characters if they seem open to that kind of information.

Patrick leaves the house through the back door straight from the kitchen table, leaving his backpack and phone behind.

What Really Occurred

The moment when Patrick smiles and says he has to get to work is the moment when Eric Switzer possesses him. Patrick instantly puts Eric's plan into action.

08:00 – 09:00

As Seen By Witnesses

Patrick's sister thought it odd that he just left through the back door without going upstairs to get his stuff. Maybe he was in a hurry.

Around 8:15, an older man named Douglas Crosby sees Patrick walking through the woods with a determined expression. He calls out a greeting, since he knows Patrick from the neighborhood, but Patrick doesn't answer. Douglas assumes Patrick didn't hear him and goes about his day.

At 8:21, Patrick's friend Hussein calls Patrick to check in, since Patrick normally stops by his house. Patrick does not pick up, so Hussein rushes off to school, expecting to meet Patrick there.

What Really Occurred

Patrick leaves the house at 8am.

Instead of following his normal routine of meeting his best friend Hussein before school, Patrick makes his way through the woods to the house where Eric Switzer's parents still live.

He enters their yard unseen, locates the hidden key underneath one of the flower pots outside of the garden shed, and steps inside. Hidden beneath the wooden floor is an M16 and ammunition. He loads the gun, puts several spare magazines in his pockets, puts on a yellow raincoat from the wardrobe, and leaves the house around 8:45.

09:00

As Seen By Witnesses

Just before 9 am, a number of students, including his friend Hussein, see Patrick walking across the lawn past their classroom window wearing a long yellow raincoat. He disappears from view as he approaches the main entrance of the school, where he is seen by security cameras walking slowly, smiling, clearly hiding something underneath the raincoat.

Just one minute later, as recorded by security cameras, Patrick opens the door to the classroom where Frank Dubois is teaching physics. The door closes behind him as he raises his weapon.

As Patrick enters, Hussein leaves his classroom and walks over to the door of Dubois' classroom, and just as he arrives, Patrick starts shooting. The cameras record the sound of several gunshots, then silence. This repeats several times. No one survives the assault on Dubois' classroom.

Patrick then kicks the door open, his yellow raincoat spattered with dark blood. He seems to be laughing and shouting, though whatever he says is not picked up over the sounds of gunfire. Hussein runs for the main entrance and leaves the building.

CCTV footage shows Patrick walking slowly down the hall, clearly enjoying himself. He tries to kick open doors to classrooms, but the school lock down protocols have already gone into effect. Most doors are locked, and students caught outside of classrooms are running for the exits. Patrick fires wildly at them.

Ashley Dapperton, who was in the bathroom when the shooting started, sneaks out and runs for the main exit. She almost makes it, but she twists her ankle and stumbles and falls. Patrick walks up to her, aiming his weapon at her head.

Right at this moment, at 9:16 am, Peter Cox and Carol McLean from the local police department rush through the main door. They see the carnage and Patrick standing with his gun aimed at a wounded student. Both police officers fire several shots, killing Patrick instantly.

What Really Occurred

After arming himself, Eric takes Patrick to school. Eric/Patrick goes straight to Frank Dubois's classroom and shoots the teacher several times in the chest. After that, Eric/Patrick fires two full magazines into the rest of the class, killing everyone.

Eric's only real target was Frank Dubois. Everyone else was just a bonus.

The Official Investigation

The official investigation ended quickly. Young man loses it, gets a gun, and shoots up his school. Some details of the case are strange, such as the precision of the shooting, the type of gun, and how it was acquired. Both the FBI and the ATF thoroughly investigated Patrick Wilson and his family, but they were unable to find anything useful.

The total death toll of the shooting was 21 dead – Frank Dubois, his 19 students and the shooter himself. Of the seven students that were caught outside, not counting Ashley Dapperton, three were seriously injured and the rest escaped without injury. The injured students have since been treated and released from the local hospital.

Of course, there are lots of forensics to do, reports to write, victims to care for, and damages to be paid. The court case will go on for years, but the actual on-site investigation was concluded within two weeks. Eric Switzer was never implicated.

Where Do The Players Start?

Because of their police connections, the player characters have plenty of leads to choose from. Leave it up to them to choose what to investigate and in what order. The most important thing is that they interview the witnesses who can lead them to Switzer.

They will start the scenario with a handout that gives an overview of the school shooting as well as a profile of the perpetrator Patrick Edward Wilson (see the end of this scenario for the handouts).

Probable courses of action for the characters are:

- Visit Devonsport High School
- Watch the CCTV footage
- Visit the morgue
- Read the forensic reports
- Visit the evidence locker
- Interview witnesses

If the players are creative and come up with other ideas, indulge them and reward clever investigative tactics.

Those injured during the shooting are either at the local hospital for observation, or have already been discharged. The deceased are either still at the morgue or already buried.

Visiting Devonsport High School

When the player characters start their investigation, the forensics team has long since completed their investigation, but the school is still closed. Students from Devonsport High are now attending school at Forks High School, approximately 30 minutes' drive away. The hallways are eerily quiet and empty.

Outside of the main entrance, there is a temporary memorial for the victims of the school shooting. Photos of the victims have been hung from a nearby tree and flowers cover the ground around it. At the GM's discretion, and depending on when the player characters arrive, one or more people could be gathered around the memorial, crying and hugging.

Among the names of the victims are Denise Milano, Amy Landauer, Kevin Schulz, Victor Cozens, Evan Hart, and Leila Guthrie. All 14 or 15 years old.

GAINING ENTRANCE TO THE SCENE

The doors to the school are locked most of the time, but from 9 am to 4 pm there are cleaners on-site. Crime scene cleaners have a professional obligation to not let curious outsiders in. However, if Chief McLean is present, they will grudgingly allow the player characters in.

Inside the school, cleaning is in progress. Most of the blood has been cleaned up, but there are still red outlines on the floor. The smell is a mixture of the strong chemicals used by the cleaners, and a slight tinge of rot and decay. Floodlights have been placed around the main hallway and in the classroom of Frank Dubois. Currently, the cleaners are working on repainting and refurbishing the school, removing bullet holes from walls, and repairing other damage done during the shooting.

TALKING TO THE CLEANERS

If the player characters interview the cleaning crew, they are distraught, stressed, and have dark circles under their eyes. The cleaners insist that new blood stains appear every time they come in for the day, making their job almost impossible. The cleaning crew spoke to the police about this, but they laughed at this obvious nonsense, and told the cleaners to just get on with their jobs.

SPENDING THE NIGHT

After speaking to the cleaners, the player characters may decide to spend the night to track the appearance of new blood stains.

Paint the scene. Focus on the strong smell of chemicals and the flicker and buzz of any lights present. Around sunrise, the player characters are overcome with a sense of dread. Footsteps echo down the hall. Then comes the distant sound of gunfire, followed by panicked screams and laughter. It seems to come from everywhere at once, including inside their heads. The sounds grow to a deafening crescendo, rattling the teeth in the player characters' heads and the floors under their feet.

Suddenly, one of the player characters steps in a pool of wet blood while another feels a still-warm bullet casing roll against the toe of their shoe. Eventually the sounds fade, leaving behind fresh blood and bullet casings. The PCs need to ***Keep it Together***.

SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

The surveillance cameras in the school are no longer recording, but they still have power. The controls for the cameras are located in a back room of the principal's office. Once in the room, player characters can reactivate the CCTV cameras and watch the closed-circuit screens. Should they leave the cameras recording overnight, the cameras pick up the same thing as **Spending The Night**, with violent image distortions.

Watching The Surveillance Camera Footage

The files from the CCTV camera recordings can be found at the police station. Dwayne can use his influence to get copies, brought anywhere they want.

Except for the massacre in Frank Dubois' classroom, the entire shooting was caught on camera. Watching the tapes is a grim and unpleasant experience, and leaves player characters stuck on footage duty rattled. Anyone watching the CCTV footage has to ***Keep it Together***.

See Act 1 – The Shooting and Act 1 – Interviewing Witnesses for the contents of the tapes. Patrick's body does not shift or change at all on the recordings.

Something is wrong with the footage itself, however. The image flickers and noticeably distorts on a few occasions. Standard forensics analysis dismisses them as a technical fault. Player characters may notice, however, that this happens whenever Patrick looks up at any of the cameras, making it impossible to catch his eyes or face straight on.

Visiting The Morgue

The morgue is located in the basement of the local hospital and is a surprisingly large facility for such a small town. The walls and floors are covered in mint green tiles and the strong fluorescent lights in the ceiling are enough to nauseate anyone. The local morgue has copies of all the autopsy reports written by the FBI. They also have some of the bodies still in their care by order of the FBI, due to conflicting results.

The coroner, Dr. Berger, greets the player characters. He is a tall, gaunt man who often smiles and blinks slowly. He wears round glasses and his smile is crooked and dirty. He smells of old cigarettes, coffee, and sweat. His demeanor is fidgety and he is clearly nervous about something. Regardless of any aesthetic failings, he's happy to answer the player characters' questions, especially if Chief McLean is present.

Below is a list of suggested topics. If the player characters manage to get the coroner talking, he will mention the strange changes he has seen in the victims' wounds.

PATRICK WILSON

Patrick Wilson was killed by multiple gunshot wounds from firearms matching those carried by the local police. There is no reason to suspect that the version given by the cops doesn't match reality. It is also corroborated by video evidence from the surveillance cameras.

OTHER VICTIMS

All deceased, except for Patrick Wilson, were killed by M16 fire, as indicated by initial ballistics tests. There is no reason to believe there was more than one shooter at the scene.

STRANGE CHANGES

The initial forensics reports do not match subsequent examinations. Someone with one gunshot wound to the belly in the FBI report now has three gunshot wounds to their back, for example. The initial report is dismissed as faulty, but it is still in the archives.

If the now-gone forensics experts were to examine the bodies again, they would see that the wounds have changed. They will keep changing as Eric replays his game over and over.

If player characters watch the bodies throughout the night, they can even see the wounds disappearing and reappearing before their eyes.

Dr. Berger has followed up on these reports and seen the changes himself. What he has seen scares and confuses him. He does not wish to discuss it further.

Reading The Forensics Reports

The FBI wrote very professional and detailed forensics reports. The reports all corroborate the witnesses and the surveillance camera footage. Blood and ballistics reports can be found at the local police department. Copies of the autopsy reports are still at the local morgue.

BLOOD ANALYSIS

The blood analysis reports on Patrick Wilson's corpse show that the blood on his clothes came from two different sources. One was identified as Patrick Wilson, but the other source doesn't match any of the wounded or dead students. This sample is, of course, from Eric Switzer, but the police don't have a DNA sample from him. Notes in the report indicate that they believe that the samples were contaminated and should be retested.

BALLISTICS ANALYSIS

The weapon used during the shooting was an M16 A4 Assault Rifle. Its serial number has been removed, making it almost impossible to trace.

The gun bears 2 sets of fingerprints. One set is Patrick Wilson's, the other is unidentified with no record of the prints in any database. These prints are from Eric Switzer.

When the police bagged and tagged the gun, it still had 10 rounds in the 20 round magazine. Cops retrieved 2 empty magazines from Dubois's classroom, and another 3 in the main hallway.

The analysis reveals that all bullets recovered at the crime scene, that didn't belong to the police officers, were fired from the same gun.

Patrick Wilson was carrying 4 more fully loaded magazines for a total of 10 magazines.

Visiting Evidence Locker

The evidence locker contains everything Patrick Wilson was carrying during the shooting. The two items of interest are his weapon and the ammunition he was using.

The M16 found in the evidence locker is the physical representation of the weapon Eric keeps using in his purgatory. The gun smells of gunpowder and, if touched, the barrel may feel burning hot, as if the gun was recently fired.

The ammunition has no serial number on it and looks almost home-made. Another strange detail is that the number of bullets in the magazine keeps changing from one day to another.

If, for some reason, the player characters decide to fire the weapon, they will feel a strange sensation of power, invincibility, and hatred. It surges through their bones and fills their very beings, until they throw their heads back in laughter. When they stop firing and let go of the weapon, the feelings slowly subside. At GMs discretion, the firing character must ***Keep it Together***.

Interviewing Witnesses

Many people witnessed the shooting, but most of them were in a state of panic and either hiding or running. The majority of these accounts corroborate each other, but many have contradictory details. This is to be expected from traumatized students and teachers. Checking the CCTV footage will soothe any doubts the player characters have about the shooting.

ADVICE TO THE GAMEMASTER

The police have witness statements on tape, but the player characters should really speak to the witnesses themselves.

If the player characters completely ignore the witnesses, one of the player characters receives an anonymous text: "Have things to tell. Meet in the alley behind the library 10 pm tonight". The text in question comes from Ashley and Hussein. They've heard rumors about the player characters doing some kind of follow-up investigation. Both witnesses want to tell the player characters what they saw.

Any of the witnesses can attest to the systematic bullying at the school, but they also say that it only happens to the 'weirdos'. As mentioned before, speaking out about the bullying draws unwanted attention.

Hussein Abtahi

One of the most reliable witnesses is Patrick's best friend Hussein. From his seat in the classroom, he saw Patrick walk across the lawn that morning. Excusing himself, he went into the main hall to meet his friend. Patrick was not there, but he could see the door of Dubois' classroom closing.

Hussein can't quite remember when the shooting started, but he remembers seeing Patrick calmly walking around the classroom executing students. He wanted to run, but was frozen in terror for several minutes, and he thinks he may have fainted at some point.

Patrick turned to face Hussein and the two locked eyes through the window in the door. Hussein didn't recognize his friend. Patrick's face was completely covered in blood and totally expressionless. His eyes were lifeless.

At this point Hussein is sure he saw two things. Patrick's face changed completely into that of a young but hardened military man. Second, Patrick grew at least nine feet tall, and was suddenly wearing military fatigues and combat boots. Hussein did not tell the police or the FBI this, but he can describe the face well enough for a sketch artist to make a good rendering.

Patrick then approached the door and kicked it open, and Hussein ran for his life.

Hussein is now attending Forks High School and takes a bus every morning from a stop about half a mile from his home.

Hussein knows that Frank Dubois actively seeks out talented students to nurture, and Patrick was one of his proteges.

Ashley Dapperton

Patrick's girlfriend is the daughter of the mayor, Phillip Dapperton, and also one of the most interesting witnesses to interview. She hasn't returned to school since she doesn't see the point. Everything reminds her of Patrick, and she doesn't have the strength to face that right now. She spends most of her time lounging at home in the Dapperton luxury villa.

When the shooting started, she was in the bathroom. Not really knowing what to do, she first hid, then decided to make a run for it. She fled the bathroom as soon as the shooter's back was turned.

Panicked, she ran for the main exit, but tripped and fell. Suddenly Patrick was standing over her, and as she looked up, he had changed. He was no longer Patrick, he was someone else. His face was contorted in hatred and pain, and his head bent back in morbid laughter. Patrick aimed his gun at her head and she closed her eyes in prayer. She heard gunshots, but somehow she was still alive.

She won't tell the police this, as she knows that it will make her father look bad, but she may be more forthcoming if Toby Hoivok talks to her. She believes that she was hallucinating, but has dreamed of the face she saw every night since the shooting, so she can provide a very detailed description.

Ashley is also well aware of the bullying that happens at the highschool. In fact, she is something of a bully herself. She has little patience for anyone who doesn't conform. This attitude has softened since the shooting, as she now finds herself grieving and powerless.

Mrs. Horrigan

Mrs. Horrigan is a great Hail Mary if the player characters don't realize the actual shooter was Eric Switzer. If the player characters do not come to look for her, she will call the police department insisting on talking to her old friend Dwayne McLean.

Mrs. Horrigan herself saw Patrick through the window in her classroom door. What startled her was his face changing into that of her old student Eric Switzer. She crouched down and crawled underneath her desk to hide, but the nightmare didn't stop there. The wallpaper burned away, filling her lungs with smoke. She was trapped in a hell of screaming and gunshots. She could hear the heavy footsteps of the thing outside killing her students before losing consciousness.

Mrs. Horrigan is on medical leave in her small house in the outskirts of Devonsport. She was deeply traumatized by both the shooting and what she saw. She tried to tell the police about her vision, but they dismissed it as post-traumatic stress disorder.

She remembers Eric Switzer as an odd kid who was both idolized and harassed by his fellow students. She can't explain what she saw during the shooting, but she stands by it.

The Wilson Family

Patrick was the oldest son of Clara and Paul Wilson. His sister, Elisabeth, is 14 years old and attended the school when the shooting happened. They are all completely devastated by what Patrick did. They have no idea why he would do something like that and did not see any warning signs.

Patrick was a bright student with good grades and a deep love of science. He had just been awarded a prize in the Science Olympiad, and his pet project was cleaning up the Pacific Ocean. He was in a relationship with Ashley Dapperton, the daughter of mayor Phillip Dapperton.

As the GM desires, the Wilsons can be subject to the hatred and anger of the people of Devonsport, particularly the ones who lost their children in the shooting.

Frank Dubois

Since Frank Dubois was the only teacher killed in the shooting, part of the investigation is finding out why. The information here is found in his house, but it could instead be in his office at the school. Some items, like his phone, are in the evidence locker at the police department.

Frank lives in a large house, much too big for one person. His wife and two daughters left him 10 years ago, but he never moved. Old pictures of his daughters still decorate the walls, whereas pictures of his wife have been destroyed and scattered like trash.

Both of his daughter's bedrooms are immaculate, left untouched. In fact, Frank hardly ever went upstairs. He slept on the downstairs couch and used the small toilet in the hallway. His desk was moved into the living room, where his computer and work documents now sit. It seems like Frank lived for his work and brought it home with him.

On the wall above his desk is a shelf with photos of award ceremonies showing Frank and his students, as well as trophies from various science competitions around the state. It's kept in an immaculate state.

Otherwise, the house is dirty and in need of repairs. There are also several empty bottles of whiskey and a large ashtray filled to the brim on his desk. On the backside of the house, close to the foundation and partially hidden by dead bushes, the characters may find one of Eric's occult symbols. This looks older than the others they may find around Devonsport.

In a locked drawer in his desk, there's a black notebook that contains a journal of sorts. In it are entries that date back 6 years, from the time Frank had discovered Eric's true nature.

Example journal entries are:

"He gives me no rest. The shadows follow him and I can see them. But what can I do?"

"Does he know I am watching? I must be careful. If he finds out I am in big trouble"

"If he is a threat to us all he must be taken care of."

"Tonight is the night. It will be done."

"It's done. He will no longer trouble my sleep or anyone else"

"He's back. He made it back. I am FUCKED!"

"Why is he not doing anything? He just watches me."

On almost every page in the notebook, Frank has drawn an odd symbol. Very crude and primitive at first, it soon becomes more elegant and the symbol is drawn with more confidence. It is the same symbol that has been painted on the back of his house.

If asked, all students and teachers at the school tell the player characters that Frank Dubois could be quite short-tempered after his wife left. He decided which students were worth his effort, and paid attention to them. The rest he ignored.

Occult Symbols

As part of the ritual, The Shunned have been painting, spraying, and carving occult symbols on the houses of the selected victims. These same symbols, or similar ones, can be found in Eric Switzer's apartment and carved into his body. They can also be seen in the purgatory.

One or more of the victims from Act 3 may have reported the symbols as vandalism, and it's likely that Dwayne has heard about this. It is up to the GM to decide which ones depending on how he prefers to pace this. If the victim is early on the list it gives the player characters a chance to stop the ritual before it gets too far.

Meeting Jessica

After the player characters have spent some time investigating, they will meet Jessica Inzeo. This could be her black SUV driving up alongside them when on the streets, or a phone call to Sylvia or Dwayne that tells them to get outside.

Either way, the SUV's window rolls down. Jessica, shrouded in shadow, asks in a low and measured voice: "Have you seen this symbol? Do you know what it means?" She holds out her phone towards the characters. On her screen is a photo of the symbol found around Devonsport, the symbol that The Shunned have been painting to mark the houses of the victims. Depending on whether they have been at Frank Dubois' house, they may or may not have seen the symbol.

Whatever their answer, she says nothing; the window just slides closed and the SUV drives off.

Eric Switzer

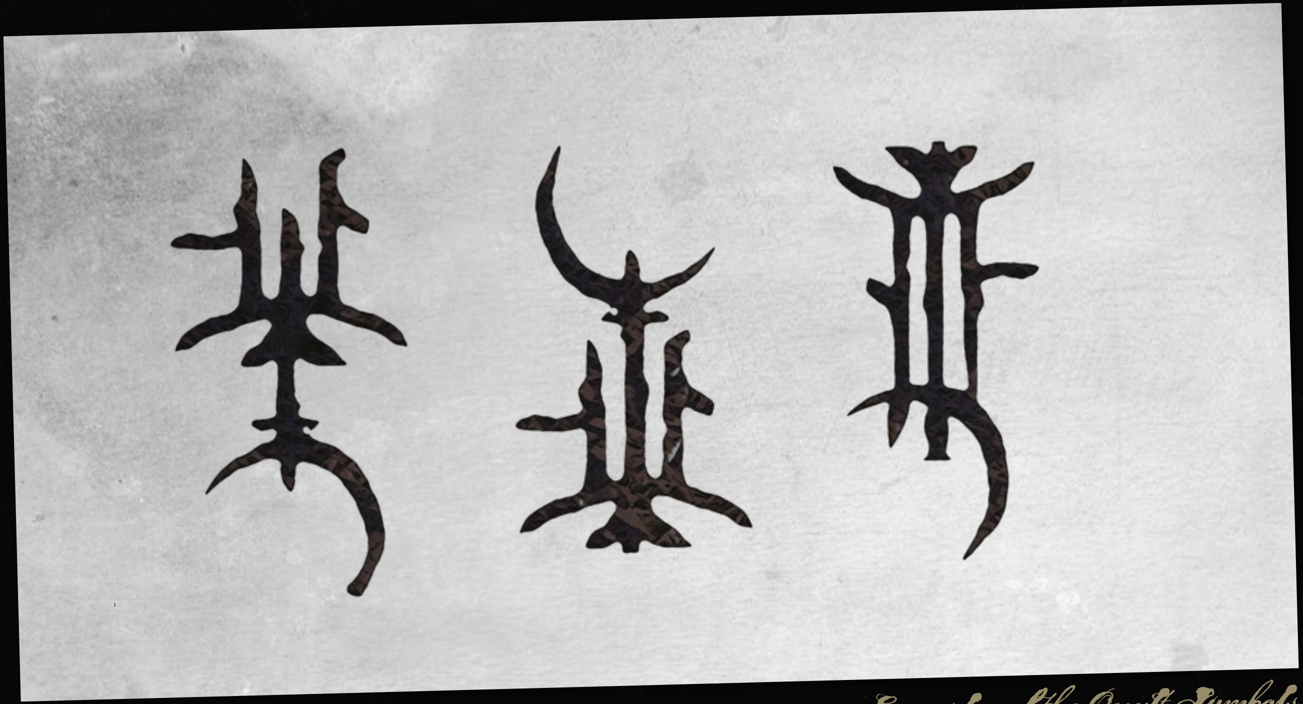
The players can connect the shooting to Eric Switzer in a couple of ways:

- Mrs. Horrigan tells the player characters she saw Eric's Face.
- Hussein Abtahi or Ashley Dapperton describe the "new face" Patrick wore, and describe the face to a sketch artist. Dwayne and/or any of the teachers can easily identify Eric Switzer from the sketch.

It's easy to find Eric once the players know who they're looking for. He lives on the 8th floor in an apartment building in Seattle.

ERIC'S FAMILY

Eva and John Switzer have had little to no contact with their son in the years since he left Devonsport. Eva makes attempts to contact him on his birthday and at Christmas, but he rarely



Examples of the Occult Symbols

answers his phone. She has invited him back on several occasions to spend the holiday season with them, but he has never accepted.

If Dwayne goes to visit the Switzer home, Eva will look shocked and nervous. She mumbles and stutters until she finally regains composure and can maintain a conversation.

If they are told that Eric is dead, Eva breaks down into tears and becomes inconsolable, whereas John just goes cold and hard and nods slowly. He thanks anyone who gave them the information and asks that they leave him and his wife alone. He will not answer any questions the player characters may have about Eric and becomes quite upset if they insist.

Eva later calls Dwayne, voice thick with tears, and answers any questions he has as well as asking what happened to Eric.

ERIC'S WORKPLACE

Eric worked at a large software company in downtown Seattle until about 6 months ago, when he just stopped showing up. The company made a token effort to contact him, but it failed and they fired him in his absence.

Using Dwayne's credentials, the player characters can find out the details of Eric's work from the company's HR department. HR knows very little, if anything, about his personal life. He had no real friends among his colleagues. If any of his colleagues are interviewed, they will attest to a troubled and arrogant, but extremely talented, young man. They are all curious to find out if something has happened to him.

ERIC'S APARTMENT

The player characters can easily get into the building where Eric lives. They just have to wait for a neighbor to open the front door. To get inside his apartment, they'll need to pick the lock, break down the door or convince the landlord into giving them access (this will be easiest for Sylvia or Dwayne).

The apartment is small: a hallway, a bathroom, a living room which also serves as an office, a bedroom, and a tiny kitchen. It is dirty, with months of dust gathered on all surfaces. The toilet hasn't been cleaned and is revolting. In the kitchen flies circle dirty plates, glasses, and cups.

Months and months' worth of fast food boxes line the walls. The whole apartment smells of stale, putrid air and rot. All the windows are closed and the blinds are drawn, making it hard to make out any details. As the player characters move around the apartment, their shoes kick up a great deal of dust.

All floors, walls, and ceilings are covered in occult symbols. Some are carved into the wallpaper and wood, some were drawn crudely with felt pens, and others were printed on paper and glued or taped to any available surface.

At the far end of the living room, slumped over the desk, is the naked body of Eric. He is emaciated and his skin is completely dried out. On his head there's a Virtual Reality headset and his ears are covered by large headphones. He's dead and looks like he has been for a while. His body is covered in tattoos and scars of the same occult symbols that are painted on the walls of his apartment. These are the same symbols the player characters might see around Devonsport. Even if they haven't spent time with each other, Dwayne McLean should lose **-1 Stability** when finding his son like this.

Vague, electronic sounds of gunfire and screams can be heard from the headphones attached to the Virtual Reality headset.

ACT 2 – PURGATORY

As soon as one of the player characters looks inside the VR headset (or, if they don't, after spending just a few minutes in the apartment) the Illusion crumbles and all four are brought into Eric's purgatory. This is a world where he is the cursed god of death, where he can kill anyone but he is forever trapped doing so.

The sounds of gunfire and screams get louder and louder. The smell of cordite fills the air and you can taste your own blood as you bite down on your tongue in terror.

All around you, the walls and ceilings tear into voxels and polygons. Shards of reality swirl around you in a vortex. You feel yourself being surgically disassembled as lethal pieces of blackened glass cut through your flesh, sinew and bone. Somehow, through this, your mind stays awake as if the purpose is for you to experience the pain.

Slowly the pieces of your existence reassemble. Your body is whole once again and you find yourself inside what looks like the bedroom of a young man. On the walls are posters of The Matrix, Fight Club, V for Vendetta, and Let The Right One In. The bed is unmade. Several shelving units are lined with computers from all eras.

This world reflects the town of Eric's childhood, from Devonsport High to the surrounding wooded areas, reaching as far as the Wilson and Switzer houses. All of the houses are a facade; there are no entrances. They seem like set dressing. Everything is twisted and dark and riddled with unnatural glitchy movements. It's as though the world is filled with software bugs.

Eric's violence in his purgatory spills over into the real world. The strange blood analysis results, the reappearing wounds, the haunting in the high school, these are all echoes of Eric's Sisyphean game. The purgatory feels like an unfinished computer game. Key locations are very detailed but the rest of the world is just made out of blocks with uniform gray colors. Everything is very flat to the touch and nothing has any discernible temperature.

The scenes described in this section can be played out in any order, but it is recommended that the player characters experience some of their personal horrors and meet Eric before Grace summons them.

Grace In The Purgatory

The purpose of the purgatory is two-fold. Grace created this place as a gift to Eric as her end of their pact, but it is also the gate through which Grace and her purgatides will enter Elysium.

The purgatory is a gateway between Inferno and Elysium. Metaphysically it is a weakness in the Illusion, but to our limited minds that require Euclidean relationships between spaces, this purgatory is beneath Elysium and just above

Inferno. Even though this world is Eric's domain, Grace holds some sway over it. She won't change the rules of the game or intervene in Eric's actions. She will however after a while notice the presence of the player characters and call on them to try to make a pact with them.

The Rules Of The Game

Eric's purgatory was created as a video game, and as such has a strict set of rules. Most of them revolve around the life and death of the residents of the world.

Every time the game begins, Eric wakes up in Patrick Wilson's bedroom. He then leaves the Wilsons' house to retrieve his weapon. He may take different routes through the woods, but the destination is always the same: his parents' house.

Sometimes, he enters the house to kill his parents. Sometimes he ignores them and walks directly to school. Eric has some freedom to choose his actions, but he must ultimately kill everyone in Dubois' classroom. Shortly after he has done so, the game restarts and he once again wakes up in Patrick Wilson's bed. Any of the other residents are irrelevant to the cycle. Sometimes he decides to seek them all out to murder them, but other times he doesn't.

How To Get Out Of The Loop

These are the ways through which the player characters can exit the game:

Pact With Grace

If the players make a pact with Grace (or anger her enough) she will send them back to Elysium.

Waiting

The players don't know it, but the Illusion will pull them back to Elysium. Such is the power of the machinery. Neither Grace nor Eric has the power to hold the player characters' souls in their domain.

Killing Students Or Teachers

Another way is to stop Eric from fulfilling his dreadful purpose here; to kill everyone in Dubois' classroom. Each player character who kills someone in the classroom finds themselves back in the real world when the purgatory resets.

When the player characters kill one of the students in the purgatory, their face changes into one of the students who were killed during the school shooting. They give the player character a look of confusion, terror, and betrayal before they die.

When the players return, go to Act 3: Inferno.

The Player Characters

Inside the purgatory, the player characters wear the same clothes and carry everything they had on them in Eric's apartment. When entering this place, all of them lose **-2 Stability**.

Mobile phones have no signal, and any photos taken do not survive the transition back to Elysium.

If the player characters "die" in the purgatory, they don't die in real life. Once the world resets, they wake up where they died with no wounds or damage. The first time a character dies, they must ***Keep it Together***. After the first time, there is no need to roll.

Locations

Most of this world has been created with pixelated blocks in shades of gray. The sky above is a single grayish-white color that hovers far too low. It has an almost tangible weight and causes the player characters to bend their heads and slouch. It is impossible to see very far because everything is covered by a colorless fog, making it hard to navigate by landmarks.

PATRICK WILSON'S HOUSE

The Wilson house is of little interest apart from the fact that Eric wakes up in the upstairs bedroom in each cycle of the game.

The bedroom is an exact copy of Eric's own room from when he was 16 years old. The posters are part of the wall and cannot be removed or even felt. The sheets of the bed are the same. They are, in fact, solidly frozen into a crumpled mess and hard to the touch.

The rest of the house is all a bland gray without discernible texture. No one else resides in this house.

This is where the player characters enter the purgatory.

THE SWITZERS' HOUSE

The Switzer yard and house are an almost eerily accurate reproduction of reality as it was when Eric lived there, but the proportions are wrong. Everything feels a little bit too big, as if the memories of the place come from a small person. The doors are half-again as high as they should be, the grass on the perfectly cut lawn reaches knee high, and the two-story house itself seems to have at least two more floors attached.

When the player characters enter the backyard, they sink into the grass and anything below their knees becomes invisible. They have entered an illusion of grass that can only be seen, but not touched.

John and Eva Switzer, Eric's parents, live in this house.

Eric leaves the door to the shed open every cycle. Inside, one of the floorboards has been lifted and underneath it can be found several boxes of ammunition, a gas mask, and an empty sheath for a knife. All of these items look and feel extremely realistic.

THE WOODS

The woods cover the triangle between the Wilson house, the Switzer house, and Devonsport High. In Elysium, this area is pleasant parkland. In Eric's world, this has been replaced by a dense jungle of trees. The trunks are black or gray cylinders, the branches are unnaturally long, and the leaves have razor-sharp edges that cut careless player characters.

Some trees are low and wide, whereas others are so tall they penetrate the ceiling of the sky above. Through the woods there is one easy path. It leads from the Wilsons' house, to the Switzers' house, and further on to Devonsport High School.

DEVONSPORT HIGH SCHOOL

From a distance, the building looks a lot like the houses lining the woods: a dark gray box with little or no detail. As they approach the front gate, they can see that the inside is an almost exact replica of how it looks in the real world. The lockers are a different color, and some other minor details differ from what the player characters have seen, but in general it is eerily similar.

Depending on when the player characters arrive, the scene can either be one of tranquility before the shooting, silence after the shooting, or complete and utter mayhem during the shooting.

RUSS BELSKY'S HOUSE

Russ Belsky, a victim of the upcoming ritual (see Act 3 – Russ is victim no. 10), lives in a house that has been marked by an occult symbol by The Shunned. It stands out among the gray pixelated blocks as it is in full color and texture. If the player characters investigate, they will have to make a precarious walk through the deadly trees in the digital forest.

The scene doesn't reveal much more than what they saw from a distance. No one is present in the house in the purgatory, but the house looks much more real and much more solid. They can hear sounds of traffic and smell the sea. Burnt into the foundation on the back of the house is the symbol.

This is a clue for the player characters to connect what is happening in Elysium to what is happening in the purgatory.

Residents Of This World

These are the only residents of the purgatory except for Eric and the player characters.

THE SWITZERS

Eric's parents, Eva and John, are created in exquisite detail, down to the wrinkle. However, they are too tall and their faces are forever contorted into a look of disappointment and disbelief.

FRANK DUBOIS

Frank Dubois has been created with immense and exaggerated detail. His body is sickly thin. His head is swollen, covered with odd tufts of gray hair. His eyes are completely black and water constantly. His glasses are precariously balanced on a tiny nose, just above a huge, perpetually grinning mouth.

His breathing is labored and wheezing. His chuckling and laughing is only interrupted by a phlegmatic cough.

On Frank's angular body hangs a brown tweed suit. He drags his feet while walking slowly around the classroom.

His students sit in their seats while he plods back and forth, giggling and laughing and pointing at the whiteboard, which is covered with the same arcane symbols that the player characters saw in Devonsport and in Eric's apartment.

STUDENTS AND OTHER TEACHERS

All students and teachers have stock photo faces: expressionless, with dead eyes that never seem to land on anything. It's like they are wearing a mask. All girls wear short skirts and tight tops and all boys wear expensive polo shirts with cargo shorts. It's how Eric viewed them.

When Eric enters the class room, they point at him and laugh. Shrieking with laughter, they fall to the ground gasping for air. It's not until he opens fire that they panic and start running for safety. However, they seem incapable of actually exiting the building and are easy prey.

Anyone seeing the students laugh at Eric needs to ***Keep it Together*** or be filled with a desire to harm the children. The player characters are still in control of their own actions, however, so whether they join in the killing spree is another matter.

The First Cycle

When the player characters enter the purgatory, Eric has just recovered the weapon at his parents' house, and is on his way through the woods towards the high school.

Eric's parents are dead and hung from a tree in the backyard. Strange-looking birds shred skin and muscles from their bodies with sharp beaks.

A short while after the player characters arrive at the Switzer house, they hear gunfire from the direction of the high school.

Personal Horrors

Here are some examples of personal horrors that the player characters can experience while in the purgatory. Don't feel the need to use all of them, and definitely feel free to improvise new scenes for the group at your table. In the chaos of the Purgatory, feel free to separate the characters from each other only to let them find each other again.

SYLVIA SPEERS

Henry's Death: If the player characters approach the school during the shooting, Sylvia Speers will see her grandson murdered at the hands of Eric Switzer.

If they approach the front door, Sylvia sees Henry running for the door. Henry sees her and screams 'grandma!' at the top of his lungs just before he stumbles. Eric catches up with him, puts his massive boot on Henry's neck, and blows the younger boy's brains out. Only Sylvia sees Henry's face.

If the player characters snuck in to watch the shooting, Henry comes crawling across the floor crying for grandma. She can try to get him out of the school and run away, but eventually Eric will find and kill them.

The Husband Returns: Sylvia's ex-husband Brian appears. Her deeply hidden guilt and rage manifests in his shape. He appears as he did on their wedding day, and he looks at her with disgust. "I should have taken Richard with me. It was you who destroyed him. You are sick! Rotten!" If the other characters are close, he will point at her and start to tell them of her corruption. If she attacks him, or after a short while has passed, he will glitch and then disappear.

JAMES MARRA

Ashley's Apparition: James hears the voice of Ashley Dapperton from an adjacent classroom. Somehow, he can hear the sound above the gunfire. As he enters, he sees a projection of Ashley Dapperton on one wall. She's talking on the phone with someone. Suddenly she turns to the camera, smiles and says "You thought I didn't know about your camera, you pervert? I know all about you." She starts laughing and the image flickers before disappearing.

If anyone follows James into the room, they see him staring at a blank wall.

Watching the Watcher: When entering a room anywhere at school, James sees a room filled from floor to ceiling with monitors. All of them have a video feed of him sitting at his computer watching someone else. Turning around, the door to the room is gone, and in its place are more monitors.

The images on the monitors flicker, and James sees everyone he has ever stalked staring down at him with bloodshot, unblinking eyes. A monitor behind him breaks, and the subject of his camera climbs through, bloodied and glitching. She just stares silently at James.

Then, one by one, all monitors break and the room is filled with victims of James's voyeurism. There's nowhere for him to go, he's surrounded with their hateful stares boring into his mind. Suddenly, they all jump on him, kicking, screaming, and tearing. James loses consciousness. When he comes to, he's back in the school; he is bruised, his face is scratched bloody as if someone tried to tear his eyes out, and his clothes have been torn to shreds.

DWAYNE MCLEAN

Ghost of Erin Fuller: Erin Fuller, the journalist that Dwayne murdered appears in the purgatory. You may introduce this step by step. Consider not even showing her. Dwayne will just know that she is there. You, as the GM, should start with something small and then escalate:

- In the parking lot outside of the school stands a car. A 2004 Toyota Camry, ACG809B. The car is covered in mud and algae. It looks as if someone had dragged it up from a swamp where it had been buried for years. The driver's door is open as if someone had just stepped out and left just now. Wet footprints lead away into the woods.
- There is a stench of swamp water and rot. On the ground, in a muddy puddle, lies a small video camera of an older model. On the display flickers images of Dwayne McLean, but there is no sound.
- Erin appears. She is bloated and rotten; she tries to speak but her lungs are filled with swamp water and there is a bullet hole right through her body. She stumbles toward Dwayne and points at him.

Susan's Tears: Dwayne's wife Susan, who died of cancer more than 20 years ago, was his conscience and guiding light. When Dwayne is alone in the purgatory, she appears behind a glass surface. This can be a window of a house, in a mirror, in a puddle of water on the ground, or just flitting across a glass surface on a wall. A light flickers on, and there stands Susan. She is skeletally thin, her head is bald, and she is dressed in a hospital gown. She looks as she did at the end of her life. She presses her hand against the glass. She looks at him, tears flowing from her eyes. The barrier between them can't be broken. There is no sound. But her eyes say, "Oh my love, what have you become?" Then she clasps her hands to her heart and cries. The light goes out. The surface is black. She is gone.

TOBY HOIVOK

White Rabbit: A young boy sits bent over something. The boy reminds Toby of his brother Ken. The boy looks up at Toby (and others that might be there). He sits petting a white rabbit. "See, the fur feels all warm and smooth. But look!" He lifts up the big rabbit with both hands and shows its underside. It is raw, hairless, and infested with maggots, centipedes, and all kinds of vermin that creep and crawl out from an infected wound in its stomach. "Nothing to do but kill it, right?" Then the boy startles at the sound of a gunshot. Without a word, he runs away. The rabbit is still on the ground, cautiously exploring the scene, leaving a trail of parasites behind.

The Mangled Corpses: Two corpses, brutally mangled, appear. They sit leaning against a wall. Blood is everywhere including, suddenly, on Toby's hands. They are moving, but too broken to get up. These are the corpses of the truck drivers he murdered. One of them talks with a broken voice, blood and foam on his lips: "Thank you for showing us the truth, we are your servants now. When the time comes, we will have the strength to walk again. Then we will show them! We will show them." He starts to laugh. It is impossible to get any more information from them. They just smile at Toby as if he was their savior.

Eric Himself

Eric looks a lot like himself in the purgatory, but nine feet tall, stronger and wearing fatigues and military boots. While he kills students and teachers, he howls and laughs in absolute pleasure. Behind that pleasure, though, is the pain and fear of knowing that an eternity of repeating the same actions awaits him.

If the shooting has already happened, the player characters see Eric walking around among the corpses. He's kicking them and shooting them again to make sure that they are dead. When the player characters approach he looks up with confusion and interest. They become his top priority and he will pause his shooting spree to talk to them.

Eric shouts everything, taking breaks to wheeze with frightening laughter.

"I DID NOT CREATE YOU. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHO ARE YOU? DID SHE SEND YOU?"

Eric has trouble answering questions, but will happily show the player characters around.

"THIS IS MY WORLD. YOU ARE MY GUESTS. I AM GOD! SEE WHAT POWER I HAVE!"

If the player characters keep asking questions, he will either kill them out of frustration or just carry on with his own task.

Between shouts, Eric casually kills students and teachers alike. He shoots them, stabs them, or breaks their necks and stomps on their heads. He does so with ease.

"THEY LOOKED DOWN ON ME AND THOUGHT I WAS WEAK, BUT LOOK AT THEM NOW. HOW WEAK THEY ARE. AT MY MERCY. LIKE INSECTS."

If the characters ask him who 'She' is

'SHE IS GRACE. SHE CAME TO ME IN MY VISIONS. SHE WAS MY ANGEL OF REVENGE. SHE GAVE ME THIS!'

If asked about Patrick Wilson or Frank Dubois

'FRANK... FRANK... HIM I ALWAYS KILL FIRST. ALWAYS. I SMASHED HIS HEAD AGAINST THE FLOOR. DO YOU WANT TO SEE?"

'PATRICK? HE WAS PART OF IT LIKE ALL THE OTHERS. NO ONE IS INNOCENT.'

If asked about his parents

'WHAT KIND OF PARENTS HATE THEIR CHILD? THEY KNEW ABOUT IT, THEY KNEW ALL BUT DID NOTHING. NOW THEY DIE BY MY HAND OVER AND OVER.'

If told that they are not actually dead

He grabs you and looks deep into your eyes.

'THEY WILL BE. THEY WILL BE. AND I HOPE THAT THEY SUFFER LIKE I DID!"

Dwayne Mclean

If Dwayne tells Eric that he is his father then Eric looks confused for a bit. Then laughs.

'AND WHAT DID YOU DO TO HELP ME? NOTHING! NOTHING!

He will then attempt to kill Dwayne.

Toby Hoivok

Eric approaches you and looks at you with confusion in his eyes.

'YOU HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY GRACE AS WELL. WHAT DID SHE DO FOR YOU? DID YOU DO SOMETHING FOR HER? WHEN YOU SEE HER AGAIN, PLEASE TELL HER THANK YOU FOR ALL THIS.'

James Marra

Eric scoffs at James Marra as he looks down on him.

'I USED TO BE LIKE YOU. WATCHING. WAITING. IT'S NO GOOD. YOU NEED TO ACT. TAKE WHAT YOU WANT NOW!'

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

While the player characters talk to Eric, he murders any "students" who run by.

If the player characters try to take any students or teachers to safety, Eric will become aggressive and kill them the first chance he gets. Since this is Eric's purgatory, any attacks he makes always cause at least a **Critical Wound**. The player characters can only barely scratch him. If the player characters hide, he will ignore them.

Once the player characters have upset Eric, he will remain hostile even after the game resets. This means they will need to try to avoid him to uncover the rest of the clues in this chapter.

Killing Eric in his purgatory is not possible. Bullets hit him, but cause no pain or injury.

Grace Summons Them

When the characters have spent some time in the purgatory, Grace will detect their presence. They don't belong in this world between Elysium and Inferno, and their guilt and inner darkness have started to bleed out into this shadow world. She is surprised to detect them here, but at the same time pleased; they may be a powerful tool in the final confrontation with Jessica, if she can turn them into her servants. She closes in on them, letting her mind pull them into her own soul.

Suddenly, the world starts to shift around the characters. A bleak West Coast smog drifts in around them, and the digital existence bleeds away. Before their eyes sprawls what must be Devonsport, but more than 100 years ago. They float above the main square, looking down at a large building from which music, laughter, and the sounds of sex can be heard. It's likely a brothel.

The player characters can move around freely, but not interact with anything or anyone. They are inside Grace's memories, honed to a fine point by her years of rage and sorrow.

Men stumble in and out of the building for hours, drunk and exhausted. In the early morning, however, another group of men heads towards the brothel with deadly purpose. They sneak around the building, tossing flammable liquid on the walls. They close and barricade all the exits, then they set fire to the brothel. They then back off and look on. In the distance, a nine-foot-tall figure watches. It is a tall, bloated shadow quivering in delight, and a long tongue can be seen slithering in and out of its mouth. In the light from the flames, the player characters see the features of a lictor.

Horrible screams echo from inside the burning brothel. A woman, engulfed in flames, throws herself out from one of the second-story windows. She falls to the ground, still burning, and no one moves to help her. She begs and pleads desperately, but they just stand there watching. Suddenly, the arsonists and the lictor dissolve into smoke and drift away in the wind. The woman remains on the ground. Her voice is now just a whisper: "Help me".

MEETING THE NEPHARITE

When the vision fades, the player characters are standing at the edge of a large gallery. The walls are dressed in heavy crimson curtains. There is a smell of perfume and incense in the air. The floor is cold stone, and a massive circular bed sits on a raised platform with 13 steps in the middle of the room. Semi-transparent linens hang between the bedposts, obscuring what lies within but a pale glow, like that of the moon, illuminates a vague shape moving beyond the curtains. A soft voice calls the player characters forward.

When they approach, the player characters see a curvy, feminine form that pulls the curtains away and steps out to meet them. Grace appears before them in the form of a painfully beautiful human woman, long dark hair spilling across her slender shoulders; she radiates as if infused with some unknown ancient power.

"My name is Grace," she says and smiles. "Welcome to my domain.".

She will listen patiently to any explanation the player characters offer. During their conversation, she will smile and act charming, even seductive. She will not explain the purgatory. But she will be honest about the plans she has set in motion if she thinks she can get the player characters to join her. She has a cruel side however; Grace is now a creature of Inferno and she sees humans as mere flesh. She understands human passions and what they hold dear, but suffering, abuse, and anguish go both ways; she may in one sentence speak about injustices and vengeance, and the next offer to murder innocents to satisfy someone else's desires. She only truly cares about her servants and those who grant her influence; everyone else is just flesh and may be sacrificed. Regardless of any change in interaction, Grace maintains a low, calm, seductive tone.

During the discussion she will not say anything about who will be sacrificed in her final ritual. She does not know, and doesn't really care, what victims The Shunned have picked out.

Regarding Jessica Inzeo

"There is a monster among you. A creature, inhuman and vile, that has dwelt in your midst for centuries. It has worn many faces, and many names, and you know it as Jessica Inzeo. It turned people against me and had me murdered. I was not the first, and there have been many more like me. It will continue to spread its corruption until it is stopped. I can even see its taint on some of you. It is time for revenge. It is time that the outcasts and the unwanted stand up and tear down the rotten facade of Devonsport. Don't you think so?"

QUESTIONS

Here are some of the questions that might be expected.

What is this place: *"A place between the worlds. A realm of nightmares and desires."*

Who/What are you: *"I was once human, now I am something else. The simplest answer is that I am now a being who lives beyond mere mortality."*

Were you behind the school shooting: *"No, that was Eric. It was his drive and his desire. I just helped him because it served my purpose."*

What do you want: *"I want to bring Jessica Inzeo to my realm. I want to do to it what it did to me."*

More about the supernatural world: "If you serve me, I might tell you more."

How can we leave this place: *"I can help you, or you can try to find your own way out."*

What happens if we don't accept your offer: *"Force is their game, I only offer people what they seek. If you don't dare to take it then you're not worthy of my attention."*

GRACE'S PLAN

"Things are already set in motion. In fact, the creature, Jessica Inzeo, doomed itself when it murdered me. My servants are already breaking down the foundation of lies that uphold Devonsport. Soon, the barrier will be weakened enough so I can pass through. But you that have Jessica's trust, you who do its bidding. You can get close to her when the time is right. You can weaken her."

"You are all tormented, you are all filled with desire and sin. These are things Jessica has forced you to do. There are also things she has kept from you, secrets that she holds against you like a blade that can slit your throat whenever she wishes. I can remove these things. I can pardon your sins. I can give you what you want, but only if you help me. Will you help me?"

WHAT GRACE OFFERS

She will answer the characters' questions, listen to their desires, and ask what they want. Some of them she can grant. Others she can not. If the gifts are beyond her realm of power, she might say *"Would you rather not have..."*. Below are some suggestions:

Sylvia: Grace will offer to return Henry to Sylvia. This is within her power, since the child was killed by her servant. Henry will, however, be forever changed by his resurrection. Grace does not share this with Sylvia.

Dwayne: Grace cannot give his wife back, but she can make sure that the body of Erin Fuller is never discovered. She can also give him a chance to stand up against Inzeo. If Dwayne is irritating her, Grace gestures at the floor and from beneath the crimson drapes crawls the rotten and bloated corpse of the journalist. *"See what you did to her? And you say you don't want to help me?"*

James: Grace offers Ashley Dapperton. She can give him the nubile daughter of the mayor, and promise him that she will both love and worship him. Ashley will not willingly accept this bond and will be fully conscious of her actions, but will be unable to stop them. If James does not accept this, she can always threaten that the vision he saw becomes true.

Toby: Grace offers Toby freedom from his dark dreams and violence if he becomes her servant. She will grant him power, and he can live without guilt and nightmares as long as he is sworn to her. She will not say that his brother already serves her and they can be reunited.

THE PACT

For the characters who accept the pact from Grace, she walks over to each of them and kisses them deeply on the mouth, just once. A sense of pleasure spreads through their bodies and their vision fades momentarily. They feel something dark and wet slither from her mouth down their throat.

She will whisper in their ear: *"When the time comes, you will know; make sure you are close to Jessica Inzeo."*

The substance Grace places into the player characters is her rage and grief, congealed into black bile. This substance comes with the characters into Elyisum. When the Illusion crumbles in Devonsport, the bile weakens Jessica and hurts those who have not been blessed with it. *See the Black Bile below*.

After accepting Grace's offer, the player characters bound to her can hear sounds beyond the walls; a mix of clawing, screaming, and thudding noises of someone trying to break the wall down. It is all around them, and the walls seem like a very weak shield between them and whatever terror lurks behind them.

ANGERING OR ATTACKING GRACE

If the players anger Grace, provoke her, or attack her, she will show a bit of her power and her true self as a warning. If this does not help, she will drive them from her purgatory. She cannot kill them since they are bound to Elysium and not in her power. She also cannot hold them since the Illusion will pull their souls back. But she will make it hurt. So when she has had enough, she will raise her arms. She then screams in an unholy voice: *"Then why don't you just ... BURN!"*

A sudden fire spreads across the bed first, then the drapery, and bedclothes. Grace stands before the recalcitrant player characters in her true form. The fire crawls across the stone floor towards the player characters. They are engulfed in flames and feel the pain of being burned alive. All characters that experience this lose **-2 Stability**.

They are thrown out of the purgatory. *Go to Act 3 – Inferno.*

THE BLACK BILE

Characters that made the pact with Grace have the black bile in their bodies. This bile is infused with hatred and the essence of the nepharites' soul. The bile can't be removed without advanced surgery or magic. The player characters won't know what the bile does to them, or how to use these abilities, at least at first. But Grace's whispers may instruct them. The bile has the following effect:

Grace's Influence: Grace can sense where they are at all times, and may detect strong emotions such as fear, pain, or passion. She may cause the bile to hurt the ones that made the pact with her. It burns their guts, resulting in a -2 modifier to all rolls. She may also whisper to their minds.

Borderland of Death: The character may suffer up to two critical wounds instead of one. Player characters with the bile experience no negative modifiers from Serious or Critical wounds.

Vomit Blood and Black Bile: The character may vomit up a gush of blood and black bile. It will spray against a creature or a group of creatures and billow out like a dark cloud that emanates screams from tortured and broken souls. The character that does this will suffer a **Serious Wound** since their insides, and part of their soul, is ripped open. The spray inflicts **3 Harm** of magical damage and blinds the intended target.

ACT 3 – INFERNO

Regardless of how, or when the player characters return from the purgatory to Eric's apartment in Seattle, several days have passed in our world. They are tired, hungry, thirsty, and have mind-splitting headaches. It is now Sunday afternoon. When they charge their phones, they will find several missed calls. Toby's phone is full of text and voice messages from Phillip Dapperton, and Dwayne has several increasingly worried voicemails from his daughter Carol. In the last one, she says that she has been to his house but couldn't find him. She is frantic and in tears.

This act is more loosely structured than the previous two. The events may not play out in the order described, depending on the actions of the player characters, so be selective and pay attention to what the player characters do.

The ritual may or may not be completed, meaning that Grace will be stronger or weaker when she finally arrives. The Shunned may or may not be alive when Grace arrives, depending on the actions of the player characters. If they accepted the offers from Grace, this is likely to play out very differently to how it does otherwise.

Back To Devonsport

Coming back to Devonsport from the purgatory is like falling out of the frying pan into the fire. The ritual has begun and the infernal manifestations are gaining in strength and frequency. When they drive back into Devonsport, a chilly mist has wrapped the coastal town in its embrace. Life in the small town is still going on as normal. They will see familiar faces, people sitting at cafés, carrying groceries, but still, something is not right. For more information about the timeline of these events, see the section about the ritual below.

INVESTIGATION

If the player characters feel they have time, give them the option to do some research into the history of Devonsport. Just don't let them get too comfortable.

Grace

Going through digitized newspaper articles in the Devonsport Public Library, it's not hard to find the story of the brothel that was burnt to the ground in 1906. It was reported as an accident, and that the madame of the brothel, Grace Rea, was killed in the fire.

Later newspaper articles contradict this, instead saying that Grace survived the fire and was seen wandering around the town with horrific burn wounds.

On the site of the torched brothel, a newly arrived businessman built a casino. He later founded many businesses and became mayor of the "new and improved" Devonsport.

Jessica Inzeo And Inzeo Construction

Researching Jessica Inzeo can be very dangerous, but there are certain things that the player characters can find out without putting themselves at too much risk.

Jessica Inzeo arrived in Devonsport 15 years ago. She was born in Houston, Texas, but there is very little record of her life until she showed up in Devonsport. She immediately founded Inzeo Construction and within months had started construction of their 14 story office building in central Devonsport. From then on, business boomed.

There are very few indications of wrongdoing in the mainstream press, but environmental and other activist websites talk about the company as a criminal organization with no regard for anything except for profits.

If they think to look for it, the player characters find that Jessica Inzeo arrived in Devonsport within one week of the biggest local banker, Robert Bauman, dying of a heart attack at the age of 76. He had no family or siblings and there is no record of where his inheritance went.

At the time of this scenario, Jessica Inzeo is almost 50 years old, but she hardly looks a day older than she did when she arrived in Devonsport. People find this strange and even somewhat impressive, but nothing extraordinary.

Phillip Dapperton

Researching Phillip Dapperton reveals nothing new. He was elected mayor of Devonsport 7 years ago. His campaign was heavily funded by anonymous donations through so-called "dark money".

The Ritual

The Shunned have been planning the ritual since the school shooting took place five weeks ago. They stalked their chosen victims and marked their houses, and sometimes workplaces, with occult symbols. Between each sacrifice, they take turns to chant praises and invocations to Sathariel. When the first victim, Andrew Milller, is murdered, the Illusion is broken and Devonsport starts to slowly drift towards Inferno. The Shunned have 13 specific victims that they strive to sacrifice. The more of them that die, the more powerful Inferno's presence will be in the small society, and the more powerful Grace will be when she arrives.

The ritual takes place during one night, with one or two victims being sacrificed every hour. The Shunned have split into two groups, and they have divided the victims between themselves. They communicate with each other via encrypted text messages, since it is important that they murder the victims in a specific order. They are also pressed for time since they know that they need to try to sacrifice all of the victims. The first sacrifice opens the gates to Inferno, after that they have no choice but to carry out the rest in the order they have planned. The sacrifices start in the early evening and end an hour or two after sunrise when Grace arrives.

The events below take place assuming they are not stopped. The player characters have many options here. If they have accepted Grace's offers, they may want to help The Shunned to complete the ritual. If they have sided with Jessica Inzeo or simply don't want any more people to die, they can try to prevent it. If they manage to prevent the killing of one or more victims, it will have a real impact on how powerful Grace and Jessica are during the final showdown.

Devonspor

Group One

Consists of Ken Hoivok, Eliza Williams, Mark Ramsden and Simone Parker. They drive a 2008 white ford van with license plate AYR9973.

Group Two

Consists of the Braginsky Twins, Kat Rosen and Bruce Helman. They drive a black Volkswagen van from 2012 with license plate BLQ9265.

For more details on The Shunned, see the Non-Player Characters section below.

THE VICTIMS

This is a complete list of the victims that will be sacrificed by The Shunned. When the PC's return to Devonsport, The Shunned have already sacrificed the first two.

Each victim is taken by the group indicated. If one of the groups is stopped, the other one will attempt to take on their part of the ritual as well, so some of the descriptions of the victims may need to be updated accordingly.

[1] **Andrew Miller, 67:** A horse breeder who lives on the outskirts of town. He has a stall of prize winning horses and is known to be loaded. His wife, Sharon, is tied up in the bedroom of the main building, but is otherwise unharmed. Andrew himself lies eviscerated in the stable. [*Group 1*]

[2] **Scott Knell, 35:** An architect that works for Inzeo Construction. He spends a lot of time with his boat, Estelle, in the harbor. The Shunned will approach him there. Under gunpoint, they force him below deck and there sacrifice him. Hours later, his wife, Katherine, will be worried and call him, but since she is working on a really important case for Inzeo Construction, she can't go look for him. She will, however, call one of his friends, Matt, to check if he is OK and he will find the body. This phone call can come whenever the gamemaster finds it suitable. Katherine is a close work associate of Sylvia Speers, so Sylvia may receive a call from Katherine later in the scenario. [*Group 2*]

[3] **Tracey Rossner, 87:** An old woman with dementia, and the daughter of one of the townspeople who refused to help Grace in 1907. She lives in a retirement home. Eliza Williams made sure she got employment at the home. No one questioned when she took Tracey on a walk in a wheelchair. She was strangled and then cut up. Her body is in an alleyway, behind a dumpster, in downtown Devonsport. [*Group 1*]

[4] **Katie Lombardo, 36:** A nurse working at the local hospital. She is a popular individual in Devonsport and a devoted Christian. She runs a support group for women trying to get out of abusive relationships. She receives a call from an anonymous phone number. A weeping, female voice will set a meeting in the outskirts of town. There she will be hung from a tree and eviscerated. [*Group 2*]

[5] **Bill Marra, 27:** James Marra's brother is assaulted in his home. He struggled and managed to push Eliza Williams down the stairs before he was overpowered by Ken Hoivok. The struggle, and Bill's screams, caused The Shunned to rush out in panic, leaving Eliza unconscious at the scene. Bill calls James for help while being kidnapped, and James can hear the events play out over the phone. The timing of this call is important and can be used as an incentive to get the player characters moving. Bill is driven away to a parking garage and sacrificed. [*Group 1*]

[6] **Jerome Wade, 52:** The principal of the high-school and pillar of Devonsport society, Jerome lives in a lavish house in the outskirts of town. The Shunned know he always goes for his evening run at the same time, and laid in wait for him along the route. They rush him just as he opens his door and push him inside. He puts up a fight, but the Braginsky twins subdue him. They take him into his garage where they cut him open and hang him from the ceiling. [*Group 2*]

[7] **Alan Williams, 48:** With Eliza gone, The Shunned have to enter the Williams house by force. Knowing that this was a possibility, they approach the walled compound with the van at a location not seen by any external cameras. Once inside the compound, they are, as expected, attacked by the guard dogs. What wasn't expected, though, was that Simone Parker forgot to put the silencer on her gun; when she fires to dispatch the dogs, the gunfire rings loudly throughout the neighborhood and the neighbors alert the police. Moving quickly now, knowing that Alan Williams is alerted, they enter the house, find Alan, take him outside and drive off to a construction site where they carry him to the roof of the half-finished building where they cut open his belly and kick him off the side of the building attached to a chain. [*Group 1*]

[8] **Matt Lebmer, 66:** Owner and manager of the local bank. He is asleep on his sofa next to his wife Geraldine when The Shunned come into his house. They tie up his wife and throw her in a corner, and she is forced to watch as they place her husband on the kitchen table and cut his abdomen open. [*Group 2*]

[9] **Joan Borden, 34:** Priest at the Episcopalian Church of Devonsport, she is taken from her house next to her church in the dead of night. The Shunned carry her into the sanctuary, where they place her on the altar and eviscerate her, leaving her face down so her blood spills out across the stone floor. [*Group 1*]

[10] **Russ Belsky, 37:** A firefighter and local hero after rescuing several elderly people during a fire a decade ago, he has since risen to the rank of Lieutenant in the local fire department. His house is on the same street as the Wilsons' and it is his house that can be seen marked with a symbol in the purgatory. In the early hours of morning, Russ Belsky can't sleep. He is tossing and turning in his bed when The Shunned rush into his bedroom. He gets hold of his handgun and manages to get a few shots off before he is subdued, hurting Dan Braginsky seriously. The group carries on with the sacrifice before tending to Dan's wound. [*Group 2*]

[11] **Paulina Cranford, 65:** Paulina is the owner of the roadside diner just outside of town, with a breakfast buffet on weekends that made everyone from town make the short trip one time or another. The diner is a gathering point where people come together and spend time with friends. Her small house is located at the back of the diner, and she was sleeping when The Shunned broke the door down. They tied her to her bed and all gathered around, knives in hand, to chant incantations to Sathariel while stabbing her over and over again. [*Group 1*]

[12] **Robert Bricks, 56:** Owner and manager of a luxury resort just north of town, located on a cliff with some of the most beautiful ocean views in all of Devonsport. It is off-season and the resort is almost empty, with only a handful of guests. During this time of year, Robert, always the perfectionist, takes it upon himself to sleep in guest rooms to check their beds, temperature, and general feel. This leads The Shunned on a search through the building, risking the timeline of the ritual. They start shooting in the hopes of bringing him out, and they are right. While the few guests huddle in the rooms, Robert grabs his handgun and goes to look for the intruders. The encounter is short, with The Shunned quickly subduing Robert. They sacrifice him there and then in the carpeted corridor. [*Group 2*]

[13] **Phillip Dapperton, 51:** Even though it is the middle of the night, the mayor is working during these chaotic times. The Shunned enter his home, where they find Ashley sleeping in her bed. They put a gun to her head and make her call Phillip and tell him to come home, that she needs him. If James Marra is watching, he will see this on his camera feeds. Shortly after Ashley's call, Mayor Dapperton arrives home, where The Shunned subdue him. They have prepared the floor in the dining room for him. It has been painted with the same occult symbol with which they marked the house. They force him to lie prone and start chanting incantations to Sathariel. Their chanting reaches a climax just as Ken (or someone else, if Ken has been killed or captured) drives the knife through Mayor Dapperton's heart. They then proceed to cut him open and pull his intestines out on the floor. All this in front of Ashley who's left tied up and crying . The ritual is complete. [*Group 1* and *Group 2*]

Effects Of The Ritual

Soon after the third killing, Devonsport is dragged into the borderlands between Elysium and Inferno, and it will be impossible to leave. With each additional victim Inferno draws closer and its terrifying presence becomes more clear.

THE BUILDUP

Below are scenes you may use to build the atmosphere. They start slowly, but soon escalate in weirdness and supernatural horror as the ritual progresses.

The mist thickens: For each victim sacrificed, the mist closes in with new force. From the sea and from the woods, this cold chilling haze soon drapes the whole town. Sound is muffled and all sources of light create a ghostly halo. People in the distance are nothing but vague shapes.

Animals are uneasy: Cats are hissing, dogs are barking, and the seagulls are silent.

The Pale Horse: A horse, smeared with blood, runs through central Devonsport in a panic. This horse was owned by Andrew Miller, one of the first victims of The Shunned.

No road out: You cannot leave Devonsport. Every road and route leads back eventually. This may be introduced to the characters when a distraught tourist explains that he can't leave. He always ends up back here.

No Connection: It is no longer possible to contact the outside world via internet or phone. Oddly, though, James Marra's surveillance cameras in the Dapperton mansion still work, as do phone calls within Devonsport.

Stairs down to hell: The player characters look down an alleyway while in town, and instead of seeing the normal containers and garbage bags, they see a black basalt stairwell leading down. Intense heat radiates from below, and if they try to approach, they are unable to descend. The heat is just too strong. The player characters are brought back to reality by someone throwing a garbage bag into one of the containers.

Freezing cold: In the local supermarket, the doors jam shut and the temperature inexplicably drops to below freezing. One of the customers, an elderly man by the name of Ralph Kennen, is brought to the hospital and later dies from the injuries to his lungs. This passes in 10 minutes, leaving everyone inside with hypothermia and shivering from cold.

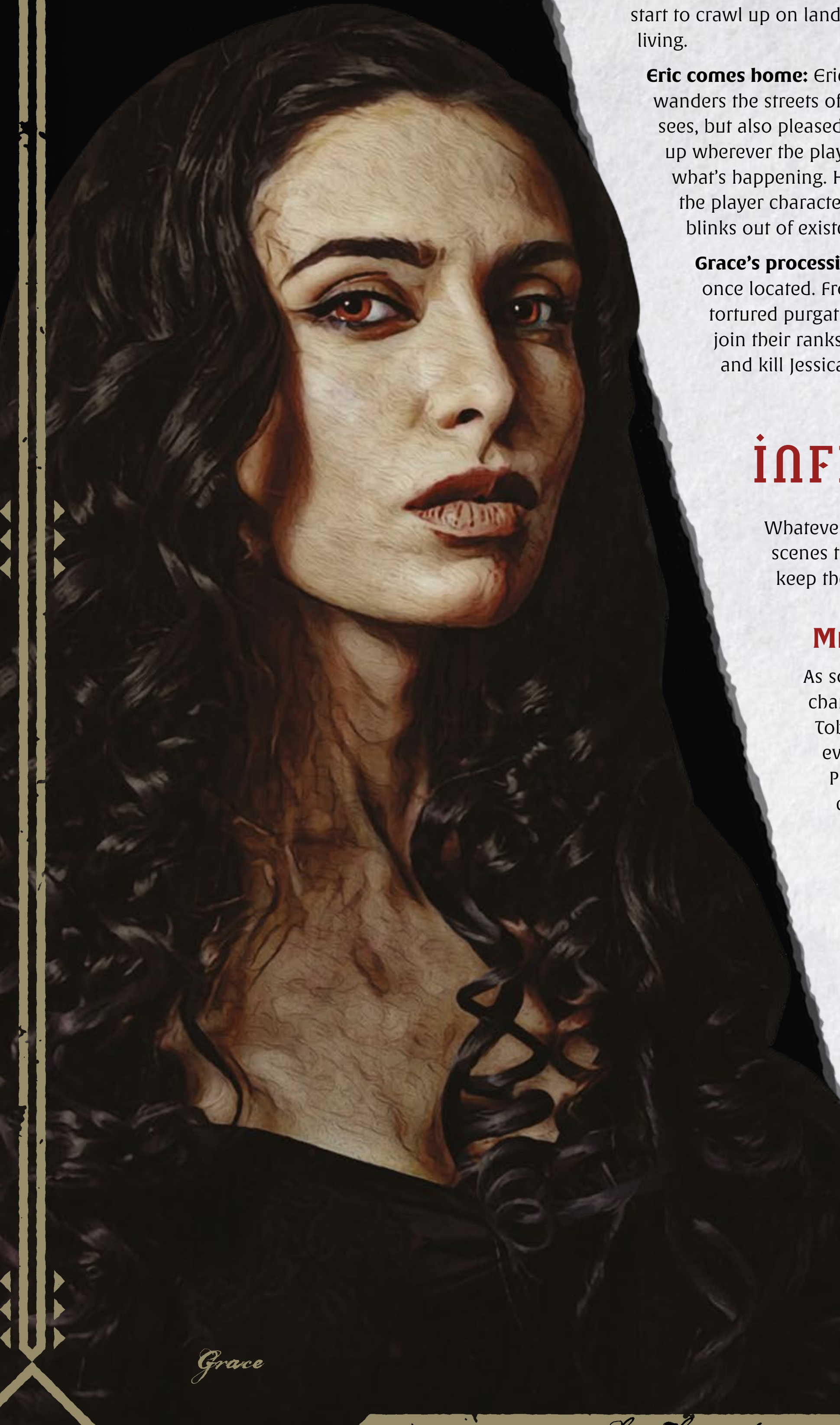
Waning lights: The street lights start to flicker and lose their strength before finally going out.

Statues weep blood: Once Joan Borden has been sacrificed, all statues inside and on the facade of the Episcopalian church start weeping blood.

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

When morning comes, regardless of how many have been sacrificed, the ritual is now complete. Inferno merges with Devonsport and Grace, for the first time in more than a 100 years, steps into Elysium to take her revenge. An atmosphere of oppressive doom weighs heavily on the small coastal town. Fear grips the inhabitants, but it will also be a time where their darkest urges will spill out. This is a good time to finish up any personal scenes the characters may have.

A brutal battle takes place in the streets between the servants of Jessica and Grace. Anywhere the player characters move, there's the risk of getting caught in the middle of a fire-fight, or get overrun by crazed purgatides. Devonsport has descended into chaos.



Grace

The dead come to life: Those that The Shunned have murdered now come to life as purgatides.

Cry of the innocent: All children in Devonsport start crying at the top of their lungs at exactly the same time, writhing in apparent agony on the floor.

Refuge in the Church: People seek refuge in the church. Now, in this night of mysteries and horror they find their newfound faith (see Forming a Mob, below).

Driftwood: The slow, sluggish waves carry with them stinking algae, dead fish, and swollen bodies from those that have drowned. The dead of Inferno start to crawl up on land and into the society to seek the warmth of the living.

Eric comes home: Eric, as he was before becoming Grace's servant, wanders the streets of Devonsport as if lost. He is aghast at what he sees, but also pleased that finally people will pay. He is likely to show up wherever the player characters are. If given the chance, he will ask what's happening. He seems confused, worried, but also delighted. If the player characters attack him, the space around him glitches and he blinks out of existence.

Grace's procession: Grace's brothel appears in the place it was once located. From it, she emerges with a procession of broken and tortured purgatides. If any of The Shunned are still alive, they will join their ranks. This army marches with a single purpose, to find and kill Jessica Inzeo.

INFERNO RISING

Whatever side the player characters have chosen, use these scenes together with the buildup towards Inferno Rising to keep the pace going.

Meeting Mayor Dapperton

As soon as Phillip Dapperton finds out that the player characters have returned, he demands to be briefed. Toby Hoivok has had one call from Phillip Dapperton every hour since they disappeared into the purgatory. Phillip has left voicemail and sent text messages, each one more frustrated and angry than the last. Jessica Inzeo is breathing down his neck and he really wants to keep his head.

He will call again within the hour of them leaving the purgatory. If Toby picks up he screams: *"Where the hell have you been!? You were supposed to get back to me as soon as you had something. Meet me in one hour in the same place as before. Bring your friends!"*

The meeting is held at the same motel as before. When they arrive, Phillip Dapperton's car is parked outside.

Inside the meeting room is Phillip Dapperton. "Well!? What happened!? Where have you been for all this time!?"

Phillip Dapperton listens to their explanation, and answers their questions the best he can. It is clear that he is under a lot of pressure, and his demeanor is nervous and twitchy.

He looks at them incredulously if they tell the full story of what happened to them. He no longer knows what to believe, but he knows that Jessica is listening in on their meeting, and she wants to know everything.

Once they are finished with their debriefing, he pays each of them the rest of their contracted money, plus a small bonus if the player characters told the whole truth about the purgatory. If the players ask how much they've been paid, tell them there's enough cash in their envelopes to buy a nice car, but not to retire for the rest of their lives.

He says that he will be in touch and then leaves in a hurry.

Jessica Inzeo Summons

Let some time pass after the briefing with Mayor Dapperton before Jessica Inzeo summons the player characters. Regardless of wherever they are and whatever they're doing, she will contact Dwayne or Sylvia and tell them to meet her outside.

Her black SUV is waiting in the street. As they approach, the window slides down silently and she speaks from inside, telling them to give her an update on the situation. What have they found out since they returned to Devonsport? She is calm and collected, but there's an urgency to her questions that they haven't felt before.

During their conversation, her phone rings and she picks up. The player characters close to the vehicle can hear the voice at the other end saying, *"They have arrived"*. She says, *"Very well. Have them stand by until I get there"* and hang up. She turns to the player characters and asks them if they know anything else.

She will press them for details about what they know. In particular she will press them for details about Grace if they told Mayor Dapperton about the purgatory. Otherwise she will demand to know what happened during their absence. Give the PCs the impression that she knows more than she's saying.

If they show loyalty, she offers more money to stop whatever is going on. She then gives them a business card with her direct number on it and says, "No need to involve the mayor anymore".

Bill Marra Calls

If James is available, he will receive a phone call from his brother Bill. In the background, he hears what sounds like a struggle, and he can hear his brother shout "James!" before there's a thud. There are sounds of running steps and the slamming of a door. Then silence.

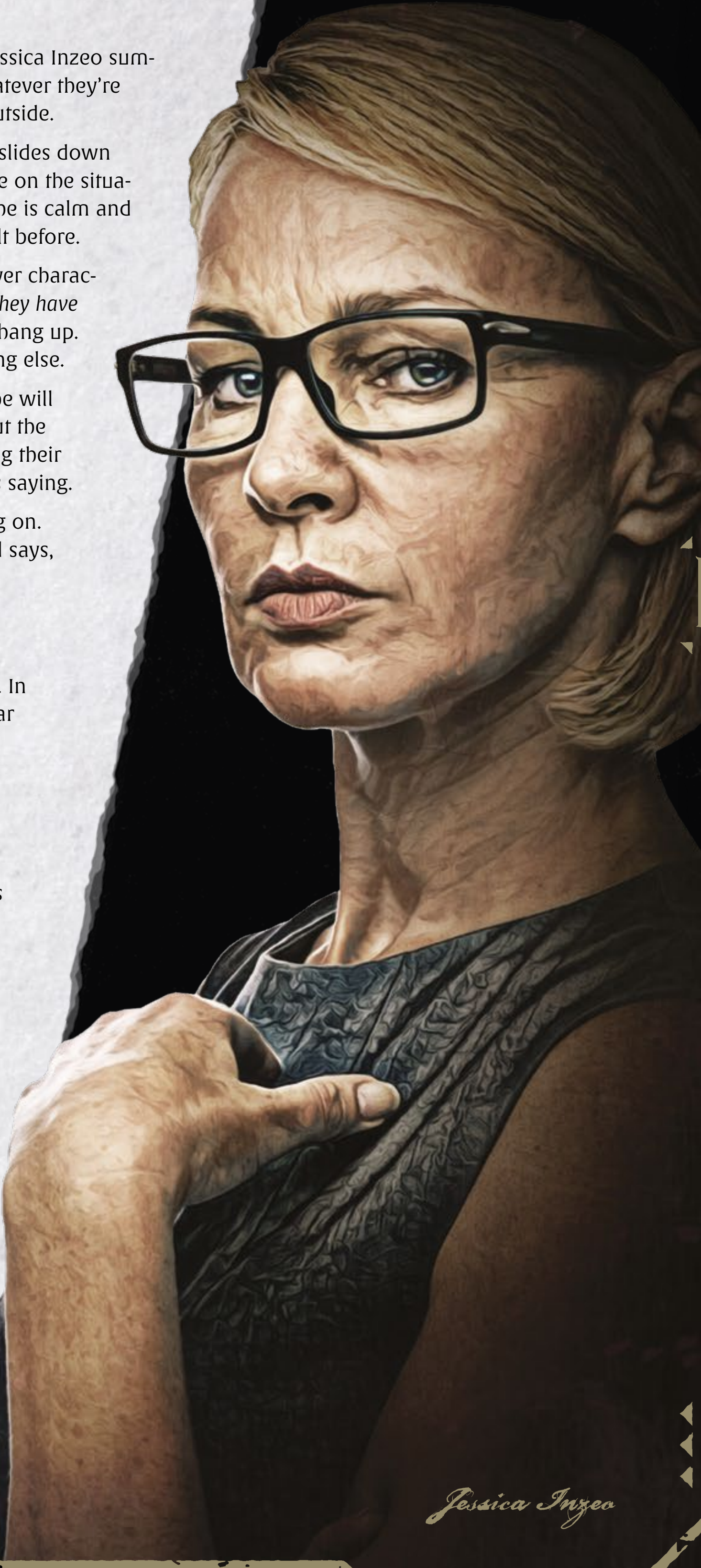
The player characters have no way of stopping Bill's sacrifice, but if they go to his house to investigate, they will find signs of a struggle and Eliza Williams unconscious at the bottom of the stairs. The foundation has been painted with the same symbol that they saw in Eric's apartment and in the house in the purgatory. If they haven't put the pieces together yet, this can give them the clue they need to connect the symbols with the kidnappings.

Eliza Williams

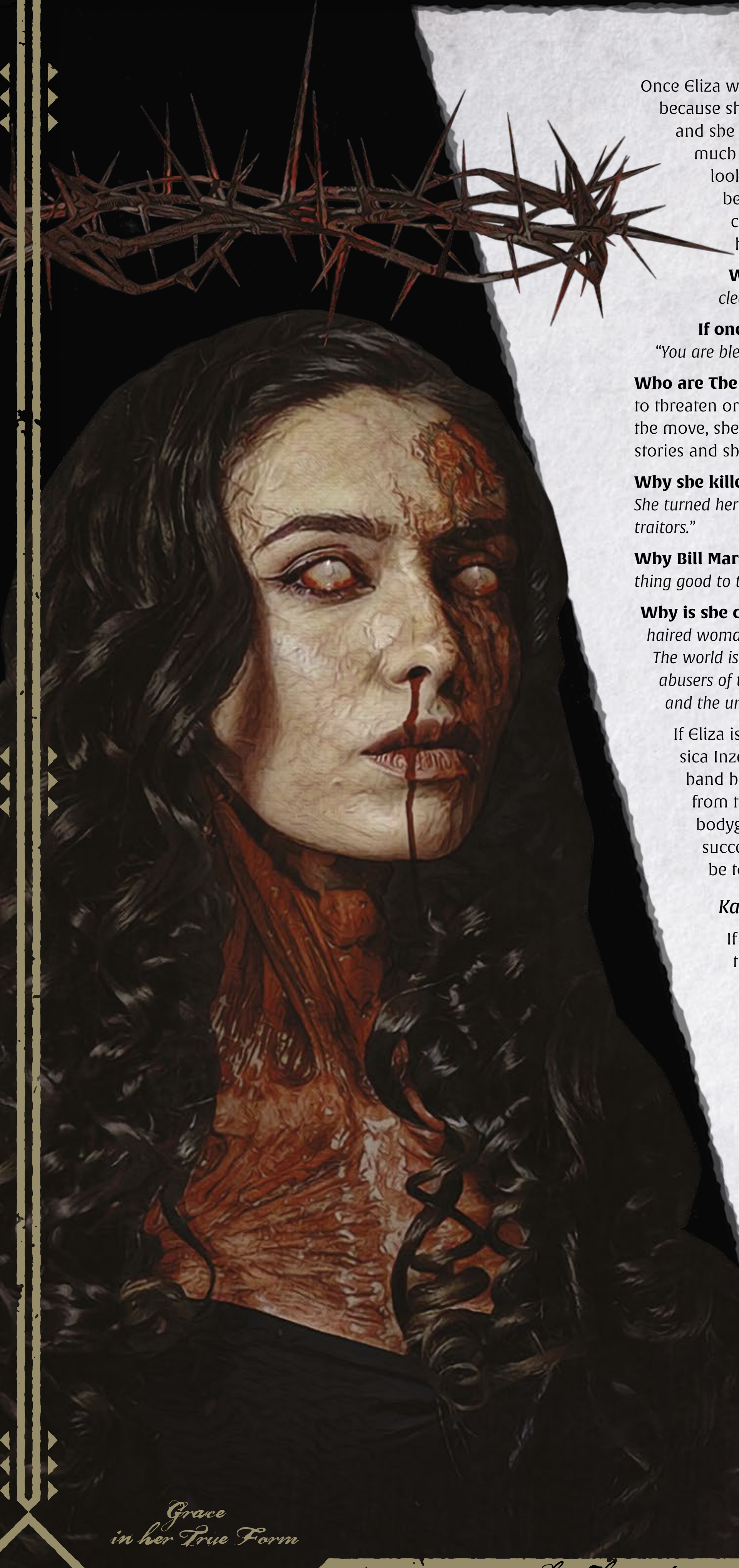
If the police arrive first at the scene of the Marra kidnapping, they take Eliza Williams to the hospital. She was found unconscious and bleeding from her head. The neighbors say that they heard loud shouting and the sound of a struggle. They saw a white Ford van driving away in the mist. They think that there were two or three people carrying someone who they threw into the back of the van.

If the player characters get to the Marra house before the cops, they find Eliza lying at the bottom of the staircase, unconscious and bleeding from her scalp. Her phone and weapon lie on the floor next to her.

Around this time, the people at the retirement home where she works will have called the police to report both Eliza and Tracey Rossner missing.



Jessica Inzeo



Grace
in her True Form

Once Eliza wakes up, she will be filled with anguish and guilt because she failed her brothers and sisters in The Shunned and she does not know what happened to them or how much time has passed. She will ask about the time, try to look outside, and guess the state of the ritual. She won't betray her fellow cultists, but she may talk to the player characters, especially if they took Grace's deal. If Eliza has any chance to escape, she will take it.

What is going on: *"It is soon time, Devonsport will be cleansed!, This place deserves nothing better."*

If one of the characters has made a pact with Grace: *"You are blessed, you have felt her touch. Soon she will be here."*

Who are The Shunned: Here, the player characters either need to threaten or convince her, but since she knows they are all on the move, she does not feel that it would be that bad to tell some stories and share the faith.

Why she killed Tracey Rossner: *"Her mother did not help Grace. She turned her face away from her. Her whole bloodline consists of traitors."*

Why Bill Marra: *"He is a taker. He is tainted and will not bring anything good to the world. He will be sacrificed like the rest."*

Why is she doing this: *"I was called upon in my dreams by a dark-haired woman named Grace. She showed me that I'm not broken. The world is broken. She showed me how I could help root out the abusers of the world. Grace stands up for the broken, the outcasts, and the unwanted."*

If Eliza is brought to the police station or the hospital, Jessica Inzeo will know about her and demand that Dwayne hand her over. She wants to personally draw out the truth from the young woman. If he refuses, she will send her bodyguards over to try to extract Eliza with force. If she succeeds, Eliza will be taken to Jessica's headquarters to be tortured.

Katie Lombardo

If Eliza is taken to the hospital and the PCs visit her there, hint at the missing nurse Katie Lombardo. Player characters overhear the staff asking for her or, if Dwayne is present, another nurse asks him if he knows anything.

Katherine Knell Calls Sylvia

At a suitable point, Sylvia receives a call from her work colleague Katherine Knell. She is in tears, and sobs that her husband has been killed. She says that Sylvia needs to find out how this could have happened.

If the player characters investigate, they find out that Scott Knell was killed in the family boat in a deeply unpleasant manner (see p. 148). Although it has been almost completely erased, they can see the outline of the same occult symbol they saw in the purgatory, on the hull of the boat.

Bringing In The Cavalry

Jessica Inzeo realizes that all signs point to something or someone wanting to take over her domain. She doesn't know who it is or how they have become so powerful, but using her significant resources, she brings in a small army of mercenaries from a private security firm.

They arrive in force, driving through town with large, black, armored Humvees, which they park outside of the Inzeo Construction offices.

If the player characters have provided her with enough information to stop the ritual, she will send mercenaries to the suitable locations to do so. A shoot-out between The Shunned and the mercenaries is likely.

Otherwise, the mercenaries will be the main fighting force for Jessica, while her bodyguards stay close to her at all times.

Grace's Whispers

If anyone accepted Grace's offers in Act 2, she will now whisper to them. If The Shunned have been stopped, it may fall to the player characters to complete the ritual. Bound to her, they are obliged to follow her orders even if it means risking their own lives. They have a choice on how to fulfill her commands though.

If the ritual is stopped and can't be continued, they are to get close to Jessica in whatever way they can. When the time comes, she will draw the Black Bile out of them to attack Jessica. They can also, of course, choose to spew the Black Bile against Jessica and her henchmen on their own accord.

Brotherly Reunion

At some point throughout all this chaos, but before the ritual is completed, it is likely that Toby meets his brother Ken. Depending on what has happened and on what side Toby stands, this may lead to a gunfight, or to Toby officially joining The Shunned.

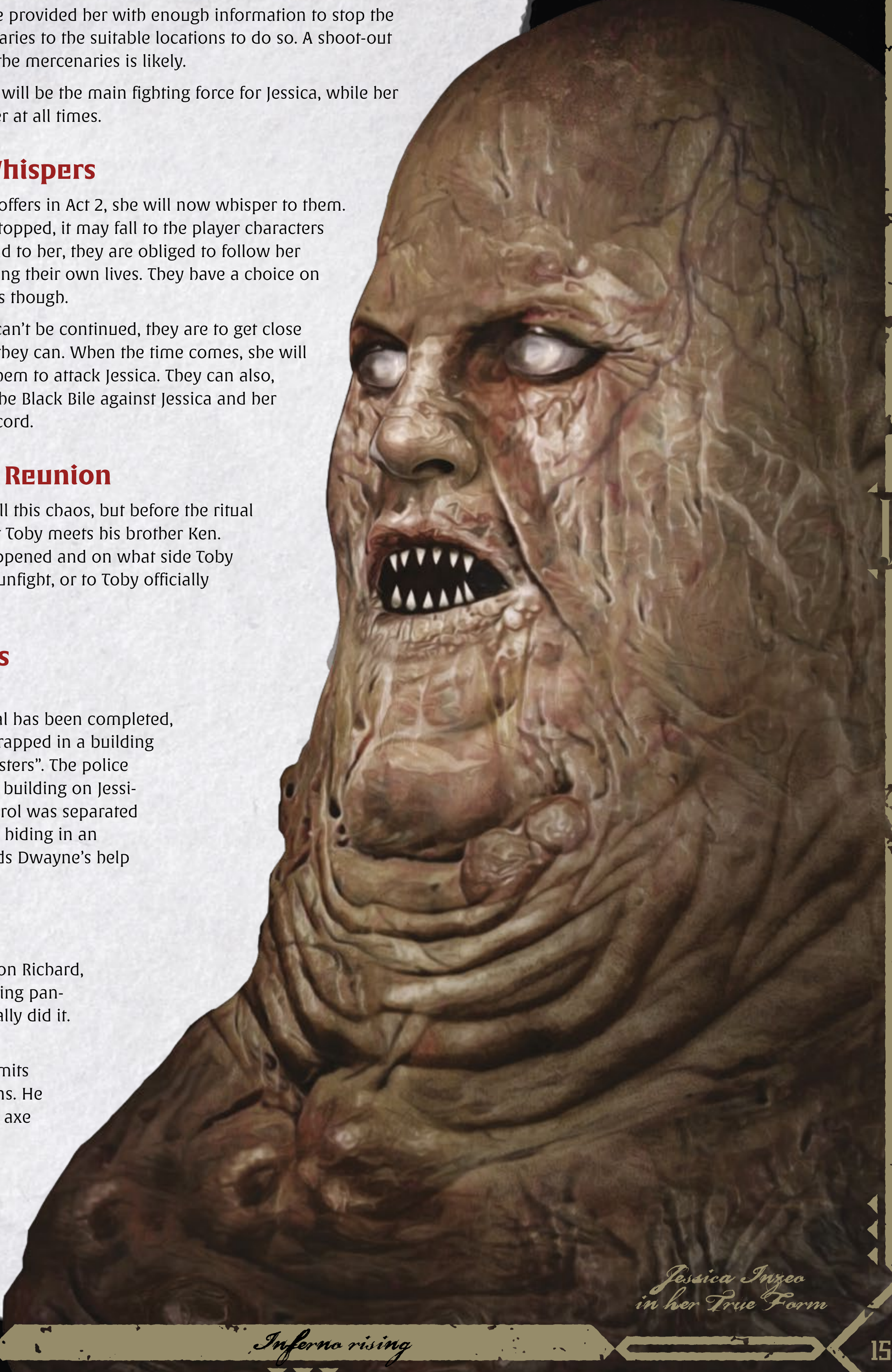
Carol Calls For Help

At some point after the ritual has been completed, Carol calls Dwayne. She is trapped in a building that is surrounded by "monsters". The police were sent to investigate the building on Jessica's orders. In the chaos, Carol was separated from Peter and Brent. She is hiding in an upstairs closet and she needs Dwayne's help to get out.

I Did It

Sylvia gets a call from her son Richard, who is half-laughing, sounding panicked. "I did it, Mother! I finally did it. I killed the bastards."

If pressed, he eventually admits that he has killed the Wilsons. He entered their house with an axe and killed them.



Jessica Inzeo in her True Form

Forming A Mob

When the player characters pass by the largest local church, they see it packed to the brim with people. The priest, Father Worsfold, leads the congregation in prayer and a sense of calm and power is emanating from them. The mist seems to have almost dissipated around the church.

This may or may not be enough protection from the purgatides once Inferno merges with Devonsport, depending on how many victims have been sacrificed and the desire of the GM, but it may give the player characters an idea of how to counter Grace. If they can convince the priest to lead the congregation through the streets to where Grace is, her strength will be somewhat weakened. This would be the equivalent of removing 3 sacrificed victims from the ritual.

While walking, people find torches and improvised weapons, and their calm prayers are turned to holy anger.

Jessica's Desperation

If the ritual is successfully completed, or if enough victims have been sacrificed, once Grace arrives, Jessica soon realizes that the battle is lost. She cannot win through force alone.

She contacts the same player character as always to meet with her, for one last, desperate, play. Jessica has in her possession an ancient artifact called "The Binding Chain" (see sidebar) that could bind Grace for long enough to give Jessica a chance to kill her. But she knows she cannot approach Grace herself, so she asks the player characters to do this for her.

She hands over a 20 foot long, thin, silver chain and tells them that they need to wrap it around Grace, then the chain will do the rest of the work. Once they have trapped Grace, they need to contact Jessica, who will be waiting nearby.

THE CONFRONTATION

The climax of this scenario takes place when Inferno has fully merged with Elysium. This is the point when Grace steps into our world and confronts Jessica Inzeo.

Depending on how many of the victims were sacrificed during the ritual, the power balance will be tipped one way or the other. Each section here is written as a suggestion for the broad strokes of how it could play out, but feel free to change, remove or add as you please. What is important is that the results of the ritual affect how powerful Grace and Jessica are.

The end of this scenario contains mercenaries with machine guns, purgatides from Inferno, and The Shunned. Instead of turning this into an action escapade, let these confrontations be cloaked by the mist. The purgatides are dark shapes appearing suddenly. The characters hear the gunfire, see the light from the muzzle flares like ghostly sheens in the thick fog. When they get there, the only things they find are blood and emptied weapons. If the characters get stuck in a long action sequence, let a wave of thick mist sweep in, and then suddenly their enemies are gone or the PCs are at another location. The violence and the action are part of the background noise. In the mist, there is time for completing personal stories and turning the tide for either the Archons or the Death Angels.

See below for more detailed descriptions of Jessica, Grace, and The Shunned.

1 TO 3 VICTIMS

It is very unlikely that the player characters manage to stop the ritual this early, but if they do Grace will be very weak in comparison to Jessica. Apart from what has already been seen, no more signs of Inferno will materialize due to the lictor's presence.

Jessica will go on the offensive, ordering her mercenaries to advance on the purgatides with frightening efficiency. One by one the purgatides fall victims of bullets, grenades, and other modern weaponry.

THE BINDING CHAIN

To any creature of Elysium or Metropolis, this seems like a mundane silver chain, but it can bind creatures from Inferno. It weighs more than 50 pounds and is difficult to manage, requiring at least two people to do so. When it comes into contact with a being from Inferno, it burns like acid on their skin, throwing weaker ones to the ground in agony. More powerful creatures may be able to keep upright, but if the two ends of the chain meet they are completely paralyzed and can not move, speak, flee, or fight.

If the player characters manage to wrap this around Grace, she will be helpless, needing help from The Shunned to remove it. If The Shunned have been killed or are indisposed, she is indefinitely trapped, giving Jessica the opportunity she needs to deliver the coup de grâce. The purgatides will attempt to remove the chain, but are thrown to the ground in agony as soon as they touch it.

Of course, if the player characters refuse the deal with Grace, she will never let them get close enough to trap her in the chain without a very convincing ruse.

Grace withdraws to her brothel to face Jessica there, but Jessica doesn't take the bait. She orders her mercenaries to burn the place down as a wonderful reminder of past victories. Grace burns once more and Jessica is victorious. When the flames die out, she places the Binding Chain around the burnt remains of Grace to bind her soul.

The only way to stop Jessica is if the player characters will somehow get close enough to her and use the Black Bile they were granted by Grace in Act 2. She is surrounded by a small contingency of mercenaries as well as her bodyguards who are all on the lookout for something suspicious, making this very difficult.

4 TO 6 VICTIMS

If the player characters manage to stop the ritual before the 7th victim is sacrificed, Jessica has the upper hand. Her mercenaries side with the police department and flank Grace's purgatides, dividing them and driving them back towards Grace's brothel.

Jessica stays in the field, empowered by her success. Her bodyguards are by her side, but purgatides beset them occasionally, distracting them, giving the player characters openings to attack Jessica if they desire.

The final showdown takes place outside the gates of Grace's brothel. Grace herself is badly wounded by bullets and incendiary grenades. Her pale skin is torn apart and chunks of flesh have been taken from her body.

Jessica has fared better and stands confidently while she sends her bodyguards forward to tear Grace apart. Once Grace has been killed, she wraps the Binding Chain around Grace to trap her soul so that she can not return from Inferno.

7 TO 9 VICTIMS

The confrontation can truly go either way, and the player characters will be the deciding factor. If they side with Jessica Inzeo, she will win, and ditto if they side with Grace. Grace is at this moment so powerful that she cannot be killed or destroyed with any ordinary weaponry. Only the Binding Chain or Jessica may defeat her.

A furious battle rages in the streets. A seemingly endless flow of purgatides slowly whittle down the mercenary force, until they are all but gone. Only stragglers crawl through the streets, occasionally firing at what they think are enemies.

Grace and Jessica meet at the town square. The mist lies thick around them. The smell of sulfur burns the eyes of anyone watching. The last remaining purgatides charge into the mist, meeting Jessica's bodyguards head on. Screams, cracks of bones, and the tearing of flesh can be heard.

If the player characters stand back, it is up to the GM what will happen here. Depending on what has happened, they can decide that the battle goes either way, but whoever remains has been severely wounded and is almost dying. This is the best chance that the player characters will get to rid Devonsport of both influences.

10 TO 12 VICTIMS

The ritual was almost completed, making Inferno's presence very strong. Fires rage in the streets. People walk outside carrying knives, axes, and any weapons they can find, ready to kill Jessica's servants. The mist smells of sickly decay and turns from cold to hot. Grace is, at this moment, so powerful that she cannot be killed or destroyed with any ordinary weaponry. Only the Binding Chain or Jessica may defeat her.

Jessica is pushed back and soon retreats to the Inzeo Construction offices to defend her last positions, but the building is overrun by ravenous purgatides. The flames of Inferno start at the bottom floor and advance up alongside Grace and her servants, leaving behind it a burnt husk.

Grace, alongside The Shunned and a large group of purgatides, attack Jessica and her bodyguards as the flames pull closer. If left alone, the flames will reach Jessica just as Grace embraces her and they both disappear in the flames.

13 VICTIMS

If the ritual is allowed to complete, Grace is almost unstoppable. Legions of purgatides walk through the streets, causing complete mayhem. Anyone offering resistance to their advance towards Jessica Inzeo will be torn to shreds. Grace is, at this moment, so powerful that she cannot be killed or destroyed with any ordinary weaponry. Only the Binding Chain or Jessica may defeat her.

Jessica will quickly retreat and try to defend her position in the Inzeo Construction offices and make a futile last stand, but the game has already been lost.

Blood rains from the sky. The souls of every human in Devonsport are in agony and many throw themselves to the ground crying and screaming.

In the final showdown, Jessica falls to her knees and bows her head. Grace walks over to her defeated opponent, with a smile on her burned face. She grabs Jessica's face and pulls it close to kiss her. Jessica convulses and screams, but is held firm. Flames engulf the two and quickly spread throughout the building. Anyone caught in the flames is burned to a crisp.

The Shunned

During the confrontation The Shunned will form a key part of Grace's force. Her purgatides are legion, but they can't blend in among the residents of Devonsport and they can't perform tactically complex tasks.

The Shunned will, by default, stay close to Grace, but she may send them out as a strike force to kill the player characters or other servants of Jessica Inzeo if she deems it necessary.

What Can The Player Characters Do?

The players may feel that they are trapped inside a battle of powerful creatures and fail to understand what they can do. While it is true that both Jessica and Grace are powerful, the player characters can easily tip the balance.

They can stop the ritual, severely reducing Grace's power. They can act as eyes and ears, warning each side of what the other is doing. They can use either the Black Bile or the Binding Chain, depending on which side they have chosen.

They can try to remain neutral, but the calls from James' brother, Dwayne's daughter, or Sylvia's son mean that they at least have to spring to action, if they are not motivated by saving Devonsport itself.

Conclusion

There are several possible conclusions to this scenario. Jessica may emerge victorious and be able to continue her reign. Grace may be able to kill Jessica, leaving Devonsport without a ruler, but closer to Inferno. If the player characters play their cards well, they may have Jessica kill Grace or vice versa and then kill whoever remains, leaving Devonsport free from the influence from both sides, at least for the time being.

Whichever way the scenario ends, have all surviving player characters describe an epilogue of what they do once things have settled down. Are they with their families? Are they alone, drunk, and miserable? Have they left Devonsport? Did they make the right choice doing what they did during the events?

JESSICA WINS

If Jessica kills Grace, order is quickly returned to Devonsport. The mercenaries are sent away and the national guard is brought in to clean up after the domestic terror attack. Residents have only vague memories of the night in question, being so shocked by the terrorism this close to home.

Any player characters who sided with Grace will disappear, never to be seen again, trapped forever in Metropolis' machinery. Any player characters who helped Jessica will be rewarded generously, but after seeing her true power, are more afraid of her than ever.

How do the player characters use the money that Jessica gave them?

GRACE WINS

If Grace manages to capture Jessica, Devonsport finds itself in a power vacuum. The powerful lictor no longer remains here, and even though the Illusion re-asserts itself, Sathariel's influence remains strong. The town doesn't return to what it once was. The affluent inhabitants leave Devonsport, as does business, and with them goes the money. There are no longer any jobs. Depression is common, and suicide rates rise. Some hold on to what once was and attempt to keep up appearances, knowing that everything has forever changed.

The national press writes the events off as a freak Pacific storm, but the story rings hollow to anyone who experienced it. They remember the writhing, screaming shapes in the mist and the smell of sulfur. Internet conspiracy theories are rife, and Devonsport gets an influx of supernatural investigators.

Any player characters who sided with Jessica will be captured by Grace and brought to Inferno's torture chambers. Anyone who supported Grace will be invited to serve her in the future as leaders of Sathariel's cult. Grace herself will rise in power after this victory and be able to reach out and touch the souls of countless sleepers close to Sathariel's principle.

Do they accept Grace's offer to serve Sathariel?

BOTH SIDES LOSE

If both Grace and Jessica are killed, Devonsport will have a chance to re-establish itself free of their influence. Inzeo Construction ceases to exist and so do many other big companies in the town. This opens things up for the small businesses once more, but the remains of Inzeo's influence can still be seen in the half-built shopping mall and the Inzeo Construction office building.

The event, as the town is cleaned up by the National Guard, is treated as domestic terrorism. Residents remember the events vaguely, but most discard their memories as wrong, simply because they are so outrageous.

What comes now for Devonsport?

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Jessica Inzeo

As a lictor of Yesod, Jessica Inzeo is powerful – but most of her power comes from her influence and the fact that no one ever opposes her.

In her human form, Jessica Inzeo is an attractive but cold business woman. Her business suits are always perfectly fitted and her skirts finish above her knees. She has short blonde hair. Her eyes are a mixture of bright blue and gray, and her stare is piercing cold. She speaks with a slight southern accent and her words are always businesslike and efficient.

Her true form is that of a lictor, see ***Kult: Divinity Lost* (p. 235)** for a more detailed description.

Home: Elysium.

Creature Type: Lictor under the influence of the Archon Yesod.

Abilities

- *Gigantic:* In her true form she cannot be grappled or knocked over in close combat.
- *Connection to Higher Power:* She has a connection to the Archon Yesod.
- *Monstrous Form:* Humans who see her true form must ***Keep it Together*** to not panic.

- *Aura of Influence:* PCs in Jessica's vicinity who obey their commands take *+1 ongoing* to all rolls, or *–1 ongoing* if disobeying.
- *The power of money:* Her money is the same as power she has over other people. She can drain resources from naive players and their relationships, putting them in trouble. ***Read a Person*** against one of the lictors' agents is at -2.
- *Thick skin:* All harm reduced by -1.

Combat [3], **Influence** [5], **Magic** [3].

Combat [Considerable]

- Draw a concealed weapon.
- Tactically retreat.
- Superior strength.

Influence [Exceptional]

- Influence society.
- Buy people's services.
- Reveal someone's darkest secrets.
- Order her servants to do her bidding.
- Manipulate individuals.

Magic [Considerable]

- Spread the principle of Yesod (Avarice).
- Artifact (the binding chain).
- Seduce a crowd.

Attacks

Jessica prefers to let her bodyguards take care of any threats, but if she has to, she will defend herself and kill without emotion. It is just not her style to do so unless absolutely necessary. She isn't especially good at fighting, just inhumanly strong.

Unarmed: Punch [2] [Distance: arm, the victim flies through the air]; Grapple [1] [Distance: arm, the victim must ***Act Under Pressure*** to get away]; Crush [3] [Distance: arm, target must be held]; Throw back [2] [Distance: arm, target is thrown several meters].

Handgun: Aimed shots [2] [Distance: arm/room].

Wounds & harm moves

○○○○○○○○○ ☠

- Ignore the injuries.
- Drops whatever is being carried in her hands.
- Black blood pours out of an open wound as she snarls at the attacker.
- Jessica's false form starts to falter and a character sees her true form through the Illusion.
- Tries to flee and doesn't care if she destroys everything in her way [PCs in their way must ***Avoid Harm*** (**2 Harm**)].
- Falls to the ground and tries to make a deal to save her skin.
- Dazed.
- Dies.

Bodyguards

These big, bulky men always dress in black suits and wear bulletproof vests. They are loyal only to Inzeo and seem to not have many interests other than serving her. Their faces are always grim and menacing, and they have crew cuts or completely shaved heads. Their weapon of choice is a Glock 9mm handgun, which is easily concealed in a shoulder holster, but they are also lethal in close combat.

These bodyguards are trained from childhood to serve Jessica Inzeo and they are totally under her control. They know very well that she is not human. They are fierce warriors, but lack subtlety, wits and intelligence. Their loyalty cannot be swayed.

Home: Elysium.

Creature Type: Human servants of Jessica Inzeo.

Abilities

- *Absolute loyalty:* They can't be swayed, scared or convinced to go against Jessica's commands.
- *Superior training:* All rolls in combat against the bodyguards has a *-1 Modifier*.

Combat [4], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [-].

Combat [Exceptional]

- Pin down with gunfire (***Act Under Pressure*** to regain mobility).
- Protect employer (Block/catch attack aimed at Inzeo).
- Martial arts (**+1 Harm** unarmed attacks).
- Weapon specialist (**+1 Harm** ranged attacks).

Attacks

Their primary focus is to protect Jessica Inzeo. They will keep close to her and try to block any enemy that advances on her. They use their handguns and shoot precise and well-aimed shots and in close combat they apply their kick-boxing skills.

Handgun: Aimed shots [3] [Distance: arm/room]; Pin down [2] [Distance: room, ***Act Under Pressure*** to regain mobility].

Martial arts: Kicks and punches [2] [Distance: arm]; Roundhouse kick [2] [Distance: arm, attacks up to 2 targets in close combat]; Throw [1] [Distance: Arm, Opponent is knocked down].

Wounds & Harm Moves

○○○○ ☠

- Shrug it off.
- Presses hand against wound.
- Stumbles backwards.
- Mortally wounded, but keeps on fighting (all attacks against target +2).
- Dies.

Mercenaries

Several dozen well trained and ruthless mercenaries are at Jessica Inzeo's disposal. They have no agenda of their own, but will obey Jessica's orders to the letter even though it means performing immoral or criminal acts – after all they're being paid very well. She will use them to their full potential as protection and as a force to strike at any target she suspects (this could include the player characters if they get on her bad side).

They are brutal but lack an understanding of the full situation, so they will sometimes not know how to act in the presence of the wide variety of threats they face.

The mercenaries drive around in black armored Humvees with a heavy machine gun mounted on the roof. They are all dressed in city camouflage and carry AR-15 assault rifles. They are the main fighting force in opposition to the purgatides. They are heavily outnumbered and even though they are battle-hardened veterans, this supernatural enemy is something new and extremely frightening to them.

Home: Elysium.

Creature Type: Human.

Abilities

- *Body armor:* All **Harm** taken is reduced by **-1**.
- *Squad tactics:* All ***Engage in Combat*** rolls against the team *member are at -1 as long as there is at least one other squad member nearby*.

Combat [3], **Influence** [1], **Magic** [-].

Combat [Considerable]

- Launch or join a coordinated attack.
- Set up an ambush with at least one other team member.
- Take cover [**+2 Armor**].

Influence [Weak]

- Call for backup.

Attacks

The mercenaries set up battle positions and advance in a tactical way. They will give suppressive fire from the machine guns mounted on the Humvees. They have no experience in supernatural entities and the wailing purgatides that come through the mist and then suddenly are right at them will create confusion and chaos.

Assault Rifle: Controlled fire [3] [Distance: room/field]; Full auto [3] [Distance: room, field, attacks up to 3 targets in close vicinity to each other]; Suppressive fire [2] [Distance: room, ***Act Under Pressure*** to move or risk Harm].

Mounted Machine gun: Focused fire [4] [Distance: room/field]; Full auto [3] [Distance: room/field, attacks up to 5 targets in close vicinity to each other].

Wounds & Harm Moves

○○○ ☠

- Retreat to safe position.
- Gushing blood.
- Dying (but can be saved).
- Death.

Member of the Police Department

The local police department, while not necessarily the most competent fighting force, have a lot of knowledge of Devonsport and may be able to truly affect the outcome of the confrontation.

Jessica will use them ruthlessly and will pull out any blackmail material she has to get her way if need be. However, they are not loyal to the death and may be convinced to stand down in certain situations, especially if Dwayne is present. If there is a conflict with the police department use the rules for Police Officer (Core rules 239).

Ken Hoivok, Leader of The Shunned

The brother of player character Toby Hoivok is the leader of the group and the only one with any military experience. He has tried to train the group the best he can, but they are a group of dissident teenagers, so his success has been limited.

He is dressed in full combat gear and has access to equipment such as night-vision goggles and flashbangs. His weapon of choice is an AR-15 automatic rifle with a scope and a suppressor that he uses with devastating precision. He moves fast and with determination when in a dangerous situation. In close quarters he uses a handgun or his sharp, curved combat knife that is also his main tool when performing the sacrifices.

Home: Elysium.

Creature Type: Human, chosen by Grace.

Abilities

- *Superior training:* All rolls in combat against Ken have a *-1 Modifier*.
- *Fanatic:* Can't be reasoned with or persuaded to abandon his cause except by Toby.

Combat [4], **Influence** [1], **Magic** [1].

Combat [Powerful]

- Pin down with gunfire (***Act Under Pressure*** to regain mobility).
- Flanking maneuver.
- Tactical retreat.
- Knife expert (**+1 Harm**).

Influence [Weak]

- Command The Shunned.

Magic [Weak]

- Visions from Grace.

Attacks

His goal is to perform the sacrifices and bring Grace to Devonsport. He has trained The Shunned for this and they have a common vision. The mission however comes first, if need be he will abandon his fellow cultists and disappear into the night, or throw a flashbang and make a tactical retreat. He will lay down suppressive fire and shoot car tires, lights and legs with precise shots. In close combat he will use his combat knife.

Assault Rifle: Controlled fire [3] [Distance: room/field]; Empty the mag [3] [Distance: room, attacks up to 3 targets in close vicinity to each other]; **Precise shot [4]** [Distance: field, only after aiming]; **Pin down [1]** [Distance: room, ***Act Under Pressure*** to regain mobility].

Handgun: **Aimed shots [2]** [Distance: arm/room].

Combat knife: **Brutal stab [3]** [Distance: arm].

Flashbang: **Detonation [–]** [Distance: room/field, hits multiple targets, NPCs are momentarily neutralized, PCs may ***Avoid Harm*** and are momentarily neutralized on a (–9)].

Wounds & Harm Moves

○○○○ ☠

- Takes cover [**+2 Armor**].
- Throws flashbang.
- Gushing blood.
- Knocked out or badly injured.
- Dying (but can be saved).
- Dead.

The Shunned

The Shunned are a group of outcasts led by Toby's brother Ken. Under Grace's influence, they unite for a common cause – punish Devonsport and the bigots that run the town. The group is made up of seven people (not counting Ken), most of them in their late teens, disillusioned with society and hoping to make a difference. Some of them have completely abandoned their families and personal lives and dedicate their whole life to the cause. Others still go to school, parties, and extracurricular activities.

A lot of people in Devonsport know of a group of teenagers who meet at some abandoned building somewhere in the woods. They just don't care – to them, The Shunned are losers with dead-end lives.

All of The Shunned are now servants of Grace and, by extension, servants of Sathariel. They cannot be dissuaded from completing their tasks, nor can they be convinced to betray their comrades.

Home: Elysium.

Creature Type: Human.

Abilities

- *Fanatic:* Can't be reasoned with or persuaded to abandon their cause.

Combat [2], **Influence** [-], **Magic** [1].

Combat [Powerful]

- Willing martyrs.
- Flee into the night.

Magic [Weak]

- Visions from Grace.

Attacks

The Shunned are all fanatical and they are fighting for a greater cause. They have scouted the area and their victims well, so they will use this to their advantage. If they are attacked, one of them will try to draw attention and fire while the other slips away. The important thing to them is that the sacrifices are performed. They will attack with whatever tool or weapon they have at hand. See the individual members for more information.

Handgun: **Panicked shots [2]** [Distance: arm/room].

Magnum revolver: **Aimed shot [3]** [Distance: arm/room].

Shotgun: **Aim & fire [3/1]** [Distance: room/field].

Submachine-gun: **Full auto [2]** [Distance: room, field, attacks up to 2 targets in close vicinity to each other].

Knife/crowbar/tool: **Violent attack [2]** [Distance: arm].

Unarmed: **Punch [1]** [Distance: arm]; **Knock down [1]**. [Distance: arm, victim is knocked prone].

Molotov cocktail: **Throw [1]*** [Distance: Arm/Room].

* Add **2 Harm** that ignores armor if the fire is not put out. Most creatures have -2 on all actions other than putting out the fire

Wounds & Harm Moves

○○ ☠

- Stumbles backwards.
- Scream in agony.
- Knocked out or badly injured.
- Dying (but can be saved).
- Dead.

ELIZA WILLIAMS

Eliza comes from one of the richest families in Devonsport. She steals money from her family to finance the group. Her father, Alan Williams, is one of the ritual sacrifices and one of her jobs was to give the group access to their house. This is something she can, of course, not do since she was left unconscious at the scene of Bill Marra's kidnapping.

Out of protest against her loveless but wealthy upbringing, Eliza always wears drab second-hand clothes; the only thing new are her combat boots.

Eliza has recently got a job at the local retirement home where the third victim, Tracey Rossner, lives.

Her weapon of choice is a SIG P320 handgun that she has been taught how to use by Ken.

SIMONE PARKER

Simone was the ideal Devonsport youth, until about two years ago when her father committed suicide. He owned a bookstore in the town center, and was one of the shops that would be closed due to the construction of the shopping mall. He organized protests against Inzeo Construction that led nowhere except to his own demise. He was drowned in lawsuits, and the police department began to question the validity of his business license. Fearing that he would lose his life's work, he killed himself.

Simone, who was a track and field athlete of promise, completely lost her way. She started drinking, doing drugs, and engaging with anything that could soothe the pain of her loss. She considered following her father into the grave, when Grace found her and gave her purpose.

Simone is dressed in tight, dark clothes and black tennis shoes. She has also opted for a SIG P320 handgun as a weapon.

BRIAN AND DAN BRAGINSKY

The twins Brian and Dan are both tall and strong. Both were champion wrestlers when they were in high-school, but a car accident put a stop to their careers and at that time they noticed how Devonsport treated anyone who didn't perform or fit in. They sank into mutual depression and looked for a new purpose in life. Grace found them.

They are both over 6 feet tall with strong, bulging arms. They are no longer very athletic though, and are both overweight, making them somewhat slow.

Their weapon of choice is the Mossberg 590A1 tactical pump-action shotgun. This is because it doesn't require much accuracy, even when used with slugs. They have a crowbar so they can break up doors quickly, and a set of molotov cocktails just in case.

They are both dressed in green fatigues from the military surplus store.

Special Rules: They get the combat move Expert wrestler, their unarmed attacks do **+1 Harm** and they may suffer 2 Extra wounds.

MARK RAMSDEN

Mark Ramsden's carousing turned from charming to abusive when he encountered heroin. His parents, who both worked in the municipal government, were deeply ashamed of their son's drug-abuse and tried to hide it by sending him out-of-state for rehab. But when Mark returned, so did his drug habits. Grace found him almost dead from a heroin overdose and gave him his life back in exchange for his services.

Mark is a skilled burglar, as he has had to steal money and drugs to keep his habit alive. He is also charming and intelligent when he is sober, which he increasingly is now that he has been given purpose.

Mark dressed in black during missions and carries a Heckler and Koch MP5 submachine gun.

KAT ROSEN

Kat Rosen was sexually abused repeatedly during her time at high school. The culprits were never brought to justice and she has since carried around a volatile mix of hatred, shame, and rage. She knows that the police department buried the case on orders from the mayor. She hates this town and wants it to burn to the ground. In her, Grace found a ready servant.

During missions, she wears camouflage clothes and military boots. She prefers to get up close and personal with her victims and carries several knives on her person. Her only ranged weapon is a Smith & Wesson 357 Magnum revolver.

BRUCE HELMAN

Always something of a criminal, Bruce Helman had his fair share of run-ins with the Devonsport police department. Throughout his entire life he has been stealing, scamming, or robbing his way forward. About nine months ago he returned from a one-year sentence in juvie determined to turn his life around, only to find that no one would give him a job or even a chance. He tried everything, but was turned down everywhere.

He started stealing again, but now he was angry at the society that had rejected him. He added violence to his crimes, not because it was necessary, but because it felt good. This is when Grace found him.

Bruce is a skilled thief and conman. He wears everyday clothing even on missions, which usually means jeans and a hoodie. Stuck into the lining of his jeans is a Glock 19 handgun.

Wailing Purgatides

The wailing purgatides are servants of Inferno who exist in the borderlands between life and death. They were once humans who died alone and abandoned. Their souls, who cried out in anguish, were heard by the Death Angel Sathariel who embraced them and turned them into her mourning and wailing servants. They are a mixed crowd of suicide victims, homeless people who froze to death, old people abandoned in nursing homes, unwanted children, and broken war veterans. All of them are rejected, despised, and cast out. Regardless of their appearance in life, their bodies are now pale, deformed, and horrific to behold. Their faces distort into horrific masks of death, and they have ripped out their own eyes. In constant suffering and hunger for warmth, they wail and cry. They are blind and lost, but may see through the eyes of their master, such as a nepharite or razide. They also feel when someone is looking at them, making it possible for them to detect their victims. If someone manages to look at one of them with love and affection, it may crawl to that person and sob silently. Otherwise they move slowly and jerkily, feeling their way with their hands, looking for life and warmth. When they feel someone's gaze, they will pick up the pace, and when close enough, they will instantly appear next to their victim.

Home: Inferno.

Creature Type: Slaves to the Death Angel Sathariel.

Abilities

- *Fanatical:* Cannot be reasoned with.
- *Knows when it is being watched:* The wailing purgatide can feel when someone watches it; even through a phone or computer screen, a mirror or through a window. It may step across space and time and appear next to that person in an instant.

Combat [2], **Influence** [–], **Magic** [1].

Combat [Novice]

- Iron strong grip.
- Drain warmth and life (Ignores armor).

Magic [Weak]

- Suddenly appear next to victim.

Attacks

Moves slowly, wailing in pain and hunger, and shrieks to the heavens. Searches for victims by smell and cold dead hands. When feeling the gaze of a living being on them, it will start to move quickly toward it and then suddenly, in a blink, just appear next to it. It will grab hold of the victim and then drain its life. Blood will gush from the victim's mouth into the purgatide. Making it for once feel warmth and love. They attack unarmed.

Unarmed attack: **Strong grip [1]** [Distance: arm, victim is pinned and must ***Act Under Pressure*** to get free]; **Drain life [3]** [Distance: arm, only pinned victims, ignores all armor].

Magic: **Suddenly appears next to the victim.** [-] [Cross distance Room in an instant, may be done through computer screen or phone and then the distance is irrelevant].

Wounds & Harm Moves

○○○ ☠

- Loses its grip.
- Howls in pain.
- Confused, weeps, with face in hands.
- Death.

Grace

Grace is a nepharite. As a human, she died a painful death after being burned and rejected by the people of the town of Devonsport. The Death Angel Sathariel embraced her, and in the worlds that lie beyond death, she was accepted into the clergy of Sathariel. Grace could not still her hatred and even though young, and weak, for a nepharite, she sought to take vengeance on the lictor that murdered her. She reached out and started to manipulate the citizens of Devonsport. Grace cannot physically influence anything and must rely on her magic and her servants to do so. The more victims that are sacrificed in the ritual, the stronger she gets. Even if she is strong, she prefers to have the forces of Inferno do her bidding.

She may appear in her human form as a seductive and supernaturally beautiful woman. When she arrives in Devonsport, she will show her true form at all times. Her body is thin and she is covered in horrific burns. Part of her face has been eaten away by flames, and a barbed crown floats in the air above her head. She walks with great majesty and wailing purgatides crawl in the mist around her. She is truly a creature of beautiful terror to behold.

Home: Inferno.

Creature Type: Nepharite in the clergy of the Death Angel Sathariel.

Abilities

- *Bound to Inferno:* Should the being become destroyed in Elysium, it will appear again in Inferno.
- *Monstrous Form:* Humans who see the creature's true form must ***Keep it Together*** to not panic.
- *Pact-Weaver:* This being can seal pacts with humans and grant them magical gifts. See ***Kult: Divinity Lost, Chapter 21 – Pacts and Magic***.
- *Invulnerable:* If The Shunned has managed to sacrifice 7 or more victims Grace cannot be destroyed when she enters Devonsport. Her body may be torn, broken and blown to pieces, but in a swirl of ash she will reform in the mist. She may only be harmed by magical means or fettered by the Binding Chain.

Combat [2], **Influence** [3], **Magic** [3].

Combat [Novice]

- Teleport somewhere within line of sight.
- Infernal fire.

Influence [Considerable]

- Seduce someone.
- Control wailing purgatides.
- Spread the principles of Sathariel.

Magic [Considerable]

- Create a purgatory.
- Communicate through signs or whispers across great distances.
- Gaze into somebody's soul and past lives.

Attacks:

Grace will never run, crawl, or appear unworthy. When she sees a victim she will in a blink appear close to it. With a gesture she will set the enemy aflame. Or she will just point and send the wailing purgatides to rip the victim apart.

Unarmed: **Strong grip [1]** [Distance: Arm].

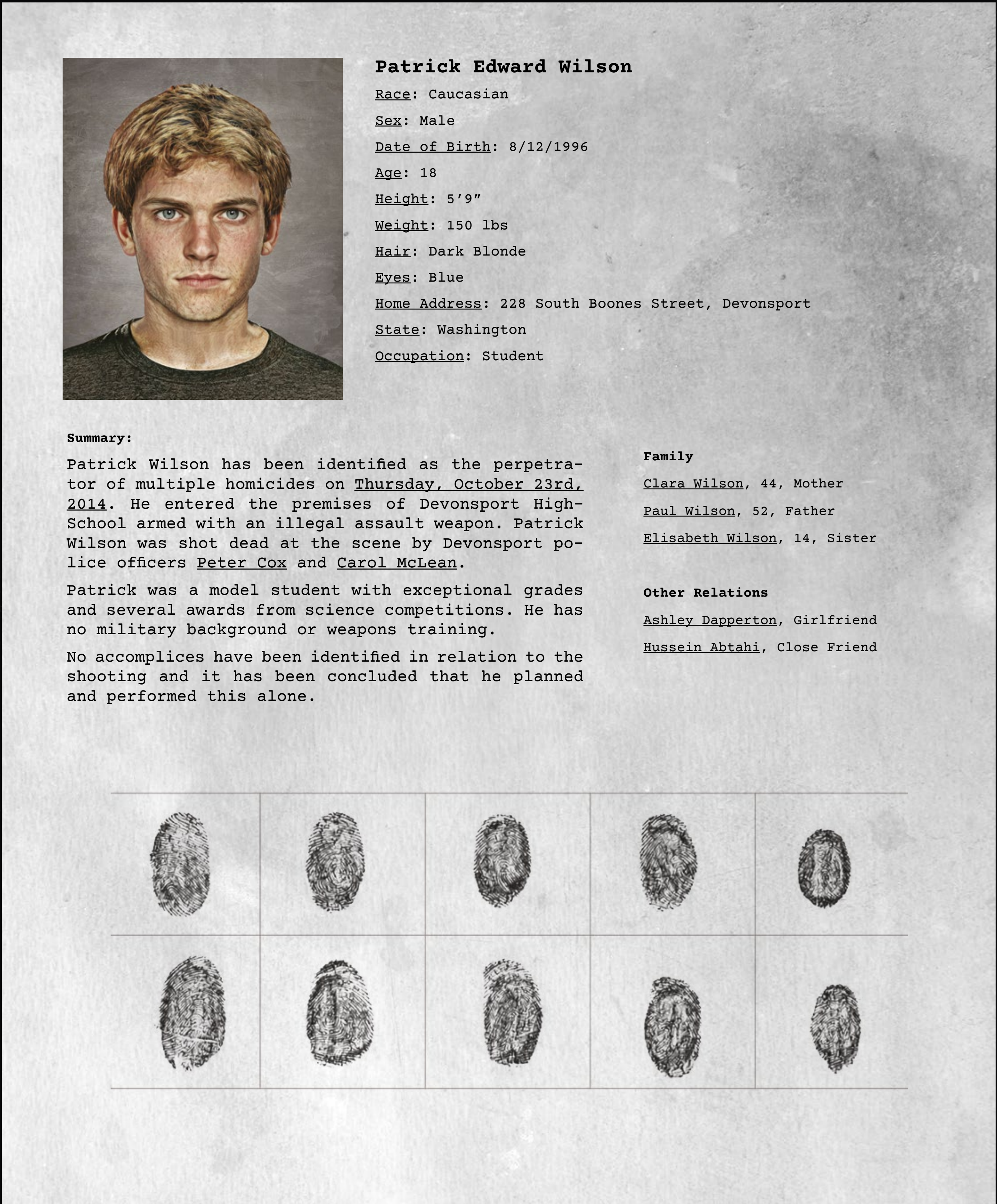
Infernal Fire: **Set aflame [3]*** [Distance: Arm/Room], **Firestorm [1]*** [Distance: Room, up to four targets].

* Add **2 Harm** that ignores armor if the fire is not put out. Most creatures have -2 on all actions other than putting out the fire.

Wounds & Harm Moves

○○○○○○ ☠

- Seems shocked at being wounded.
- Sets the attacker aflame [**1 Harm**].
- Two wailing purgatides appear to protect their Mistress.
- Grace shrieks in pain, she can no longer teleport.
- Reality twists and melts around the nepharite, making it exceedingly difficult to know where or what anything is [All rolls at -2 for everyone affected].
- Is destroyed, but may be reborn within Inferno.



Patrick Edward Wilson

Race: Caucasian

Sex: Male

Date of Birth: 8/12/1996

Age: 18

Height: 5’9”

Weight: 150 lbs

Hair: Dark Blonde

Eyes: Blue

Home Address: 228 South Boones Street, Devonsport

State: Washington

Occupation: Student

Summary:

Patrick Wilson has been identified as the perpetrator of multiple homicides on Thursday, October 23rd, 2014. He entered the premises of Devonsport High-School armed with an illegal assault weapon. Patrick Wilson was shot dead at the scene by Devonsport police officers Peter Cox and Carol McLean.

Patrick was a model student with exceptional grades and several awards from science competitions. He has no military background or weapons training.

No accomplices have been identified in relation to the shooting and it has been concluded that he planned and performed this alone.

Family

Clara Wilson, 44, Mother

Paul Wilson, 52, Father

Elisabeth Wilson, 14, Sister

Other Relations

Ashley Dapperton, Girlfriend

Hussein Abtahi, Close Friend

Patrick Wilson’s Profile and Fingerprints

Timeline for School Shooting

As per witness statements and CCTV footage.
All events described here take place on October 23, 2014

Approx. 07:00

Patrick Wilson's mother, Clara Wilson, wakes Patrick up.

Approx. 07:15 to 7:40

Patrick Wilson has breakfast with his sister Elisabeth.

Approx. 8:00

Patrick leaves through the back door without his phone or backpack.

Approx. 8:15

Witness by the name of Douglas Crosby sees Patrick walking through a wooded area behind his house.

8:21

Patrick's friend Hussein Abtahi calls Patrick to check why he hasn't stopped by.

Approx. 8:55

Several witnesses, including Hussein Abtahi, see Patrick walk across the lawn on the north side of the school building. They state he was heading for the main entrance and he was wearing a yellow raincoat.

8:56

CCTV cameras see Patrick entering the main hall of the school, heading directly towards the classroom in which Frank Dubois held his class.

8:57 - 9:06

Hussein Abtahi, as seen by CCTV cameras and correlated by his later statement, leaves the classroom and enters the main hall. He walks over to the door of Frank Dubois' classroom, where he remains for the next 9 minutes.

Hussein Abtahi reports seeing Patrick shooting several students through the window in the classroom door.

During this time, witnesses report sounds of gunfire.

9:02

Jerome Wade calls into Devonsport PD about an active shooter at Devonsport High School.

9:07

The door to Frank Dubois' classroom is opened, Hussein Abtahi now runs for the main exit and leaves the school building.

Patrick enters the main hall, the yellow raincoat is covered in blood.

9:07 to 9:14

Patrick walks around the main hall, attempting to open doors, but they are all locked.

Seven students are caught outside of the classrooms and run for the exit. Patrick shoots at them without aiming properly. Three of the seven are seen falling to the ground with gunshot wounds.

The CCTV has technical issues during this time and some footage has been lost.

9:15 - 9:16

Ashley Dapperton, as per CCTV footage and her own statement, leaves the bathroom to run for the main exit. She trips over and falls.

Patrick walks over to her and raises his weapon to her head.

9:16

Officers Peter Cox and Carol McLean enter through the main exit, each discharging their service weapons multiple times at Patrick.

Patrick falls to the floor with multiple bullet wounds to his chest and abdomen.

Starting the Investigation

Suggested avenues to pursue at the start of the investigation.

Revisit Crime Scene

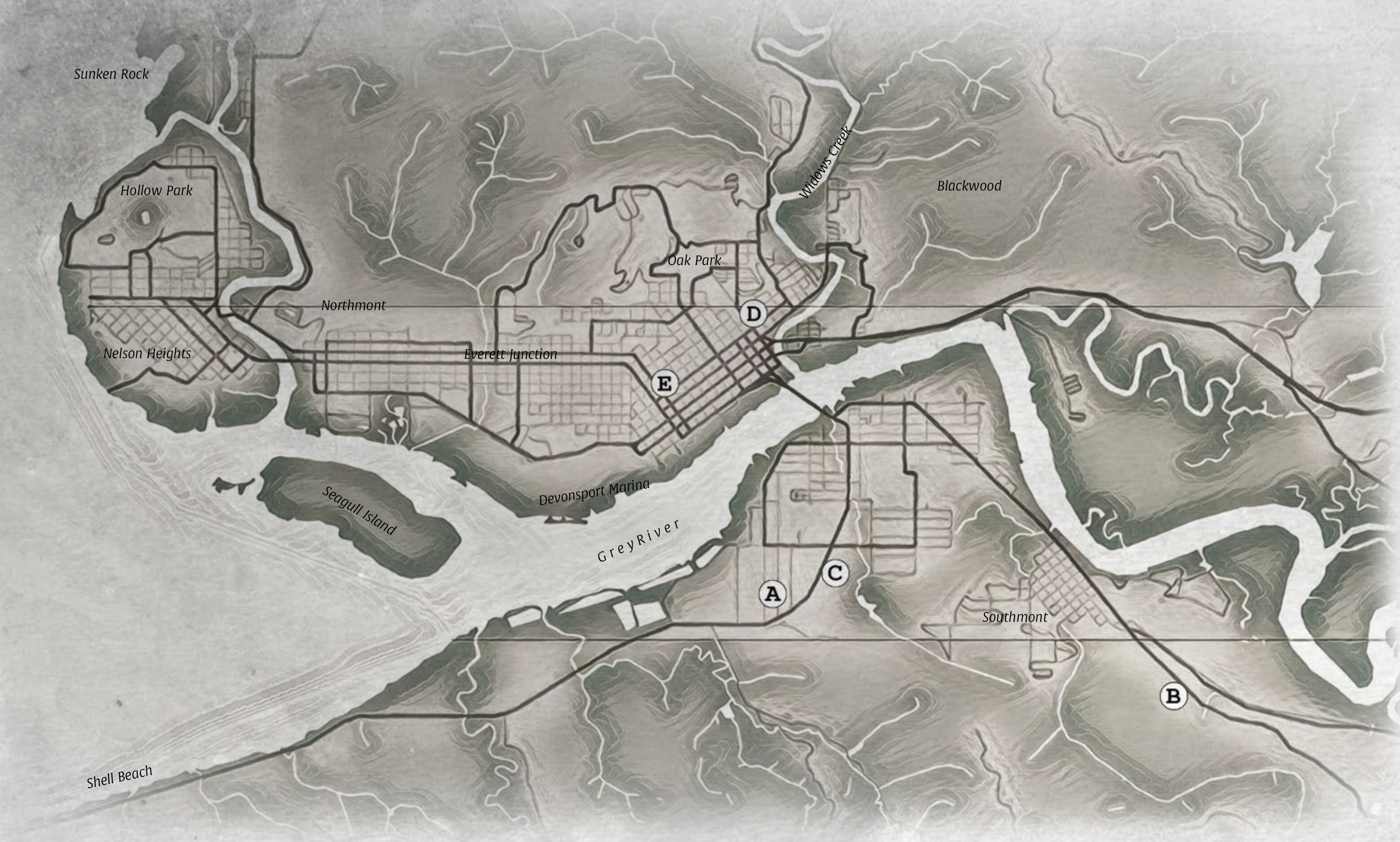
- Devonsport High-school

Physical Evidence

- Devonsport Morgue
- Police Department Evidence Locker
- CCTV Footage
- FBI Forensic Reports

Interview Witnesses

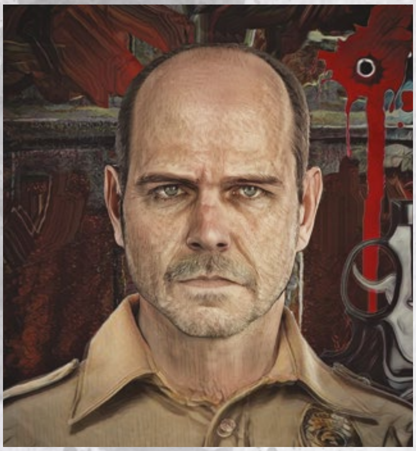
- School Staff
- Patrick Wilson's Family and Friends


Sunken Rock
Hollow Park
Northmont
Nelson Heights
Everett Junction
Oak Park
Widows Creek
Blackwood
D
E
Seagull Island
Devonsport Marina
Grey River
C
A
Southmont
B
Shell Beach

A. Devonsport High School
B. Briefing Motel
C. Wilson's House

D. Police Department
E. Inzeo Construction Offices

Devonsport



Dwayne Mclean

Corrupt Police Chief

• Notes

• Who you are

You are closing in on retirement age. Your body aches more and more, so you long for that day when you can finally hand in your badge and your gun and just leave it all behind.

You've spent your entire life serving this town, and what has it given you in return? A balding head of hair and a heart full of regrets.

Officially, you are semi-retired, which means that you work only half-time or less. This gives you access to police resources and a sense of purpose, for what it's worth. Most days you go into the office to see if there's anything you can do. In general, there isn't. You normally take very little part in actual police work, but you still need to be there since *she* has asked you to.

For a long time now, you have been working off the books for Inzeo Construction and their CEO, Jessica Inzeo. You get rid of damning police reports, doctor witness statements, and ensure that the long arm of the law never quite reaches far enough to cause them any problems. They pay well and you deserve it. At least this way you will be able to retire comfortably. Their money paid for your Devonsport house, and will pay for the one wherever you retire.

Deep inside, you harbor a hatred and resentment towards Inzeo Construction and Jessica Inzeo herself. Before they arrived, Devonsport was truly a beautiful little seaside town. Now they are ruining it with their glass office buildings and million dollar houses. You are also ashamed of what they have turned you into.

• Your Family

Your only legitimate daughter, Carol (42) has followed in your footsteps and is also working within Devonsport Police Department. She is still uncorrupted and pure. Well, as pure as you can be as a cop. You should be proud, but you just feel sorry for her knowing that one day she will fall. Carol is your *Vital (2) relation*.

Carol's mother Susan tragically passed away 22 years ago from cancer. She was your guiding light, and without her you've lost your way. When she died, you stopped fighting and gave in to working for Inzeo Construction.

Carol has been married to her husband Stuart for almost 20 years and they have one son and one daughter, Alan and Lauren.

You have three brothers: Herb, Sean, and Matthew, all living in Devonsport.

Twenty-five years ago, you had an affair with a young woman by the name of Eva Switzer while Susan was in the hospital. You are ashamed of what you did, but the affair was only the beginning. Eva became pregnant and she told you that you were the father because she had not been intimate with her husband for years.

She wanted nothing from you, just that you know the truth and that you leave her alone. This child, Eric, was to be raised by her and her husband John.

Since then you kept an eye on Eric, but he grew up as a troubled and angry young man. From afar, you grew to love him in some way. He left town years ago, moving to Seattle, and you have not seen him since.

• The Other Characters

James Marra

You have heard of him, but then again you've heard of mostly everyone in this town at some point. He's some kind of computer genius who works with surveillance.

Sylvia Speers

You have worked with her in the past, and you didn't particularly like it. She's a pushy lady who knows what she wants and will walk over corpses to get it. She's a lawyer who works for Inzeo Construction.

Toby Hoivok

A true American hero who returned from the war a broken man. He and his brother Ken have caused more fights and drunk-and-disorderlies than everyone else in town combined. You still can't help but feel sorry for him. Lately you've had little to do with him, which is generally a good thing in your line of work.

Dark Secret

About ten years ago, Jessica Inzeo asked you to do a big job for the company. A journalist by the name of Erin Fuller had started to ask questions and was getting too close. She needed to disappear. You were about to refuse when she showed you the envelope filled to the brim with money. With a dry mouth and a sweaty back, you picked the money up, nodded, and left the room.

Two days later you called Erin and set up a meeting off the motorway close to the swamp by the river. You intended to bribe her with half the money Jessica had given you, but she refused. Not only that, she showed you the hidden video camera and said that you would now help her dig up dirt on Inzeo Construction or she would go public. You grabbed her shoulders and told her that she had to leave. She started screaming, fighting, and resisting. Somehow she got out of the car and started running. So you shot her. Right in the back. Somewhere deep within you, you knew this would happen and that is why you set up the meeting so close to the swamp, where you could make her body and car disappear forever. So you did.

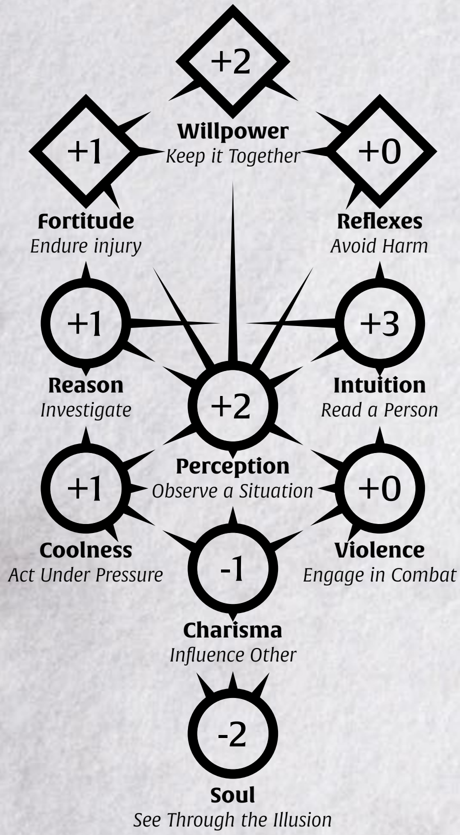
Ever since, you have been plagued by nightmares about that night. Sometimes you even see her face in the crowd. When the phone rings, you're afraid that your cops finally found the body. You are convinced that Jessica Inzeo has evidence of what you did that night and that she won't hesitate to use it.

Method of Contact

You are brought out of a nightmare by the phone ringing. It almost slips in your sweaty, shaky hand when you pick it up. It's Stephen, one of Jessica Inzeo's personal assistants. She requests your presence at Four Ways Motel at noon today.

Stephen mumbles something about money, but if there's one thing you know, it's that the money's always good.

Attributes


+2
Willpower
Keep it Together
+1
Fortitude
Endure injury
+0
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+1
Reason
Investigate
+2
Perception
Observe a Situation
+3
Intuition
Read a Person
+1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+0
Violence
Engage in Combat
-1
Charisma
Influence Other
-2
Soul
See Through the Illusion

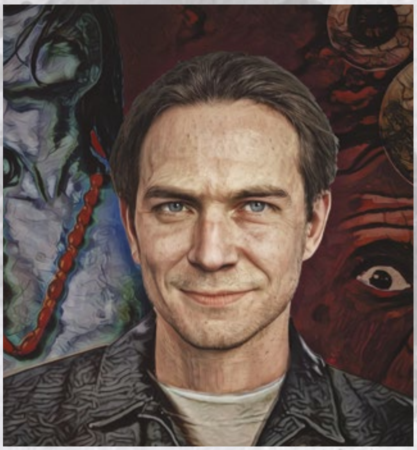
Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

☐	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move



James Marra

Nosy Private Investigator

• Notes

• Who you are

In the past you worked as a private investigator, a phone company technician, and even a government surveillance contractor. Seven years ago, you arrived in Devonsport to try to start anew after a couple of jobs went bad in Boston and New York. It did not take long for Inzeo Construction to find you. They needed someone who did the job, no questions asked, no papers signed. Payments always in cash. No trace. Perfect.

You are a loner who prefers the dark hours of a night spent in front of your computer or on a stake-out. In Devonsport, you have few friends and the only person you spend any time with is your brother.

During your time in Devonsport, you have only met Jessica Inzeo a handful of times, but she scares you. Something about those unfriendly blue eyes constantly watching. There was, of course, that late night meeting as well. When she came down that alleyway, you could have sworn she was bigger, taller and bulkier somehow. When she stepped into the light and spoke, her voice was not the normal cold and measured cadence, but rough and scraping. An odour of sweat and blood seemed to follow her. Then it all passed, but the fear you felt still lingers.

You are pretty sure that Jessica Inzeo has little in the way of good intentions, but you honestly don't care. She pays well and there are plenty of people out there willing to work for this kind of money.

Some people in Devonsport complain about the buildings that Inzeo Construction has built in the town center. They preferred it the way it was before, as a small, picturesque town. You don't really see the difference. Since you arrived, it was clear that money was in charge. Nothing else mattered. Anyone who stood out, like yourself, was instantly disliked and never really fit in here. That doesn't bother you so much, but lately you have started to feel like your brother looks at you differently.

• Your Family

Although your mom and dad are still alive as far as you know, you don't really speak to them. Your brother says they live in the same house they always have. You couldn't care less.

Your sister, Fiona, lives in Europe. She tries to call you on your birthday and around Christmas but you normally don't pick up. You're not even sure why. Maybe her positive and happy ways just make you feel even more miserable and broken.

A couple of years ago, your younger brother Bill moved out here to Devonsport to be close to you. Since then you have reconnected and you feel like he is the only person who actually knows you. Of course, there are things you keep even from him. He works as a web developer for a small design business in town. Bill is a *Meaningful (1) relation*.

• The Other Characters

Dwayne McLean

The old police chief in town. He was more active when you moved here, but lately he seems to have retired or something. Rumor has it he's dirty, and that's why he's been asked to step down. You're not surprised; everyone in this town seems to be on the take.

Sylvia Speers

She is a lawyer working for Inzeo Construction. From what you've heard, she is ruthless but efficient. If the rumors are true, her grandson was killed in the school shooting, so she must be a nervous wreck.

Toby Hoivok

Another outcast like you. Well, not like you exactly, he seems to be some sort of war hero who lost it. What's new? You've had a drink or two with him at dive bars outside of town at some point, and you could tell straight away he was trouble. You were right; a few drinks later he was in a fight.

Dark Secret

You are a voyeur. If you don't have a job, sometimes you just park your car outside someone's house to peek through the windows. The more innocent the person, the more fascinating they are to you.

During a job installing security cameras in the mayor's villa, you saw his daughter Ashley. Young, blonde and full of life; perfect for late night watching. So you installed hidden cameras in her room. She's your obsession, and whenever you can, you watch the recordings.

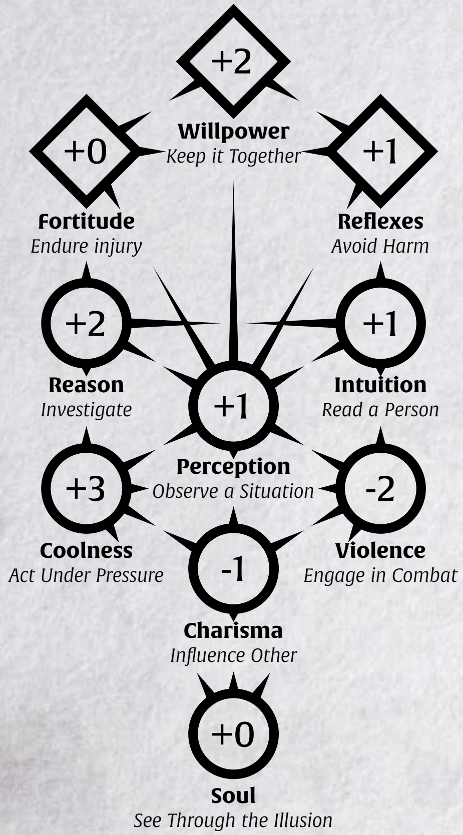
The town would crucify you if they knew about you spying on a teenage girl, but how much harm could you do just watching? She doesn't even know you exist. Ashley is considered a *Meaningful (1) relation*.

Method of Contact

Nothing new. A message in your inbox telling you to meet the next day at noon in the Four Ways Motel. Noon. Strange time though. After dark is when you normally work.

The message tells you that the payment will be made in cash once the job is done. Again, nothing new. The amount is generous as always.

Attributes


+2
Willpower
Keep it Together
+0
Fortitude
Endure injury
+1
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+2
Reason
Investigate
+1
Intuition
Read a Person
+1
Perception
Observe a Situation
+3
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
-2
Violence
Engage in Combat
-1
Charisma
Influence Other
+0
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

☐	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	–1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	–1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	–2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	–2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	–3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Toby Hoivok

Broken Iraqi War Veteran

Notes

Who you are

Six years ago, you returned from Iraq as a mess. Drugs, alcohol, and violence filled your everyday existence. You contemplated suicide every day, but had lost so many of your friends that you just couldn't bear to kill yourself.

Phillip Dapperton, your uncle, helped you. He paid for rehab, twice, and put you on the straight and narrow again. Well, at least now you can get out of bed in the mornings. You are thankful to him and you help him out whenever he asks. What else are you supposed to do? Following orders is what you do best.

You have a bad reputation in Devonsport, and deservedly so. But still, people ought to give each other a second chance. Seems like anyone who stands out or who just doesn't have money is not welcome here.

Your Family

Your father died when you were only eight years old, and since then you have been taken care of by nannies. Your mother, Laura, comes from the Dapperton family, so money was never a problem. Care and love were in short supply, though. Lately, your relationship with your mother has improved somewhat since you are now back in town, but she still values her money and assets over you and your brother. She is just a product of this damn town.

Ken, your younger brother, was the first homeless man in Devonsport. He also fought in the war, but he was in an even worse state than you when he returned. Your mother was not interested in taking care of him, so he has lived on the streets for the last six years. Your uncle tried to help him as well, but Ken had too many demons back then to listen. Maybe you can talk him into at least getting a roof over his head. Ken is your *Vital (2) relation*.

You try to find him and talk to him. You want to offer him what you can whenever you can, but you have not seen him in the last couple of months. He could be dead somewhere on a street corner for all you know.

The Other Characters

Dwayne McLean

You know Dwayne. Everybody knows Dwayne. He's arrested you more times than you can remember. But he always treated you with respect and gave you the benefit of the doubt. You hear he's retired and someone else has taken over as police chief.

James Marra

The name rings a bell. You may have had a drink with this guy at some point, but you can't remember clearly. So many nights you can't remember clearly.

Sylvia Speers

Never heard of her.

Dark Secret

One night, about a year after returning to the United States, you went out on a bender by yourself. You had too much to drink and you ended up in a fight with some young football players who nearly killed you. You went home, got your gun, drank more, and then everything went black. The next day you woke up late in the afternoon in your bed, covered in blood, more blood than could have been from the beating. Your hands were covered in cuts and your knuckles were bruised and painful.

Slowly, memory returned to you. The news reported two truckers missing from a truck stop. On the scene there was no sign of the bodies, but the amount of blood indicated that they had been mauled by a wild animal. Security cameras at the truck stop, and inside the trucks, strangely malfunctioned during a period of half-an-hour, so none of the attack was seen.

You remember the rage and the empowerment. Someone came to you in the night and offered you a chance to release that anger. A woman, you're pretty sure. Her touch enraged you, and she directed that rage towards those poor truck drivers. You remember only flashes of the attack. Blood, anger and strength. So much strength.

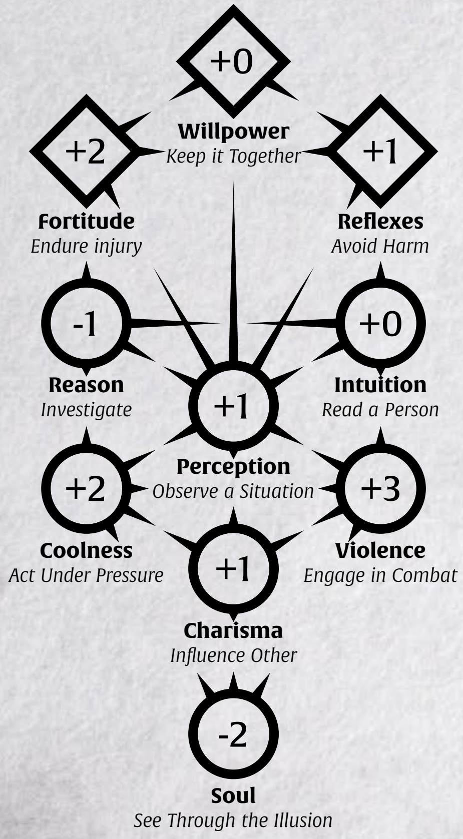
She was watching. Satisfied.

Method of Contact

Your uncle Phillip calls you. Hangovers are less a part of your routine since you started recovery, but they still happen. You tell yourself it's under control, but is it? You have six missed calls already.

"Toby, you haven't been drinking, have you?"
"Of course not, sir"
"I need you at the Four Ways Motel for a job in two hours."
"Okay."
"I need you to be my eyes and ears on this one. Okay?"
"Okay. See you there."

Attributes


+0
Willpower
Keep it Together
+2
Fortitude
Endure injury
+1
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
-1
Reason
Investigate
+0
Intuition
Read a Person
+1
Perception
Observe a Situation
+2
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+3
Violence
Engage in Combat
+1
Charisma
Influence Other
-2
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

☐	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	–1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	–1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	–2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	–2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	–3 to Disadvantage rolls
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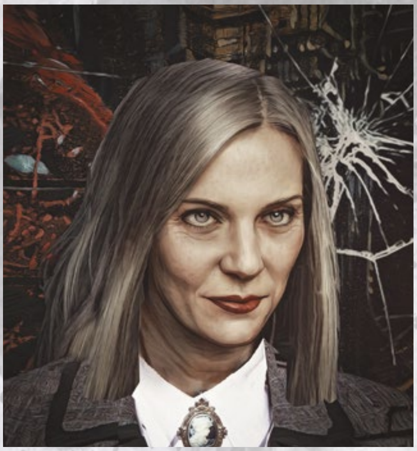
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move



Sylvia Speers

Ruthless Corporate Lawyer

• Notes

• Who you are

You're on retainer for Inzeo Construction to handle a lot of cases before they even end up in court. You've destroyed paperwork. You've arranged for lawsuits to drown competitors before they can even start planning a new project. Your work is not clean, but if not you, then someone else, so why does it matter? Sometimes you lead investigations into competitors to find out any legal weakness.

You work in a team of 9 people, a mix of lawyers, private investigators, and PR consultants. Your closest coworker is Katherine Knell, who is married to one of the architects at Inzeo Construction, but you work together with the other team members as well. Over the years you have met the company's CEO, Jessica Inzeo, on many occasions and she is a cold and calculating woman with an agenda. Just like yourself. Katherine Knell is a *Meaningful (1) relation*.

You are vain, narcissistic, and greedy. Your own fortune and pride mean more to you than anything else. Lately, however, you have started to feel disgusted by your own actions and distanced yourself from your family and friends. Voices in your head tell you that you are a bad person, but you quiet them with prescription medication and alcohol.

Since your grandson Henry was killed in the shooting, you can't shake thoughts of destroying the Wilsons, the family of the murderer. You are surprised that no one else is thinking the same thing. Surely they are somehow responsible? You've spent more than one evening outside of their house with your handgun in your lap, but for some reason it has stopped there. Maybe you have a conscience after all, and you draw that line at violence.

• Your Family

You have a son, Richard, 35, and you used to have a grandson named Henry, 14, who was killed in the school shooting. Your son is married to a woman named Kari and they both live in Devonsport. Kari doesn't like you much and the feeling is mutual. You tried to get along with her while Henry was alive. Richard is a *Meaningful (1) relation*.

Richard is a broken mess and you despise his weakness, so you stay away. Since Henry is no longer around, there's no need to keep up appearances with Kari. You know that deep inside he also blames the Wilsons for Henry's death, but he's too much of a coward to do anything about it.

You used to be married; see "Dark Secret".

You have three older brothers who all live around the Washington DC area. Lately, you hardly have any contact with them.

Your father is dead and your mother is in a retirement home outside of Washington DC.

• The Other Characters

Dwayne McLean

Dwayne is getting close to retirement, that much you know. You worked with him during several investigations in the past, and he wasn't as incompetent as you would have thought. He is on Inzeo's books, but so are most people in this town. He's a good man, but he has demons.

James Marra

Inzeo uses this guy to do surveillance. You have never met him, but his name has appeared in papers you have gone through. You know nothing else about him.

Toby Hoivok

He's supposed to be a war hero, but from what you know he's a drunkard and a drug addict. He is taken care of by the Dappertons, the mayor's family. You don't know why and you don't really care. What you do know is that pills and alcohol mess with your mind.

Dark Secret

You were once married to a wonderful man named Brian. You married very young, and in the beginning the marriage was happy, especially after you gave birth to Richard. But then the hallucinations began. You started taking medication and went through a number of therapists. It helped for a while, but then the visions started again.

At work you seem to be able to contain them, but at home it was worse. You started seeing burned faces in the mirror looking over your shoulder, glimpses of strangers in dark coats watching you from across the street. A burning red moon in the sky. The sounds of machinery and screams.

You increased the dosage of the medication to the point you were almost comatose, but even then you would see the monsters. Nothing helped, except burying yourself in work. So you did.

Then one day, after almost 10 years of dealing with your mental illness, your husband left. He wanted to take Richard with him, but your legal expertise and contacts stopped him. Since then you have raised him yourself, with the aid of a steady stream of nannies. Richard was always a weak child, constantly bullied by others. It was all Brian's fault. He was too soft with your son. At least that is what you tell yourself. Deep inside, you feel ashamed that you have failed your family but you try to push these thoughts away.

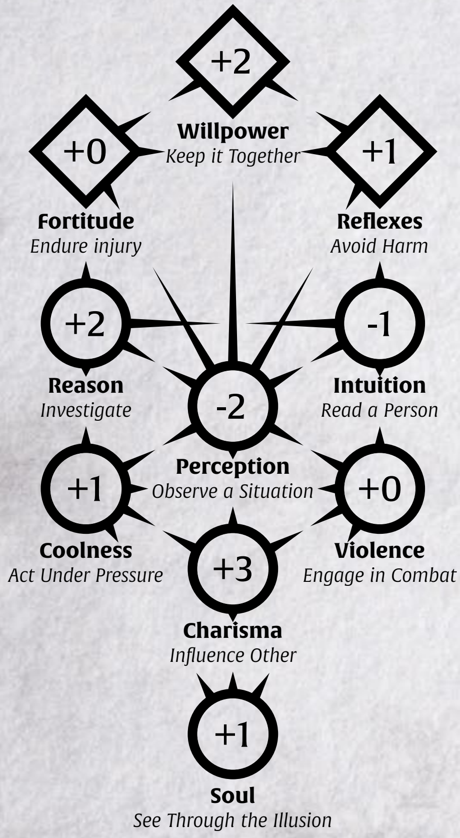
The visions haven't stopped. Lately it is becoming harder and harder to tell what is reality and what has been created by your mind. Even working doesn't always help.

Method of Contact

Yesterday, your secretary Wade popped his head into your office before he left to say that you're expected at the Four Ways Motel the following day at noon. When you asked what for, he just said it came from the very top, and smiled. Before you could ask any more questions he excused himself and rushed off.

You know what this means. Outside collaboration with some losers. But if it comes from the top, it means it comes from Jessica, and it has to be done.

Attributes


+2
Willpower
Keep it Together
+0
Fortitude
Endure injury
+1
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+2
Reason
Investigate
-1
Intuition
Read a Person
-2
Perception
Observe a Situation
+1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+0
Violence
Engage in Combat
+3
Charisma
Influence Other
+1
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐

☐

☐

☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐

Stability

☐	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls +1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

EMBRACE OF SATHARIEL

DOWNFALL

A search for a missing young man causes the characters to question where innocence really ends. Designed to explore various facets of Passion, this scenario places the protagonists on a journey of love, lust, greed and enlightenment. At the crossroads emerges a dark, erotic narrative spiked with difficult moral choices and personal dramas.

Enclosed, you will find character outlines and sheets, detailed scene breakdowns, storytelling guidelines, and lore notes necessary to run and play the game.

INTRODUCTION

During this game, the characters embark on a search for Noah, a talented young writer who has disappeared under mysterious circumstances. The investigation suggests that the young man has been consumed by a strange sexual neurosis, which has caused a major shift in his personality.

In reality, Noah has been possessed by a darthea. Forced to engage in alien sexual experiences, he gained insight into otherworldly realms, and began to pour his vivid erotic visions into his texts. At last, no longer able to control his increasingly demanding urges, he fled in pursuit of new and more extreme pleasures.

As the search progresses, the characters gradually realize the extent of Noah's transgressions and find themselves plunged deep into the world of forbidden delights. Knowledge, however, comes at a price, and the protagonists will soon notice that the reality around them warps and twists as they go deeper.

Player Characters

Below, you will find the outlines of four Aware characters predefined for this scenario: the Twin Sister, the Girlfriend, the Classmate and the Professor. Each character comes with a brief backstory and two options at the bottom of the description. The second option is always the more extreme of the two, allowing the players to portray darker characters. Each character also comes with a dark secret and a hidden agenda, which should not be revealed to other players until the climax of the story.

While the characters come with predefined genders, they may be swapped if necessary. Players are encouraged to respectfully explore different gender identities and sexualities.

For full outlines and character sheets, see the Appendix.

THE TWIN SISTER

Noah's twin sister lost touch with her brother a few months after he moved away to study creative writing. They were always very close and when he stopped calling or texting, she grew concerned. Worried and plagued by half-remembered nightmares, she packs her suitcase and goes to the city to find Noah.

Goal: Find her brother and bring him to safety.

THE GIRLFRIEND

Noah was supposed to be the perfect guy. Instead, he used and hurt her, and left her filled with grief and hatred. She still wears the scars from his final exploit and craves revenge. The Girlfriend is determined to find him, and will help the Twin Sister, but only to make Noah pay for his crimes.

Goal: Punish Noah at all cost.

THE CLASSMATE

As a foreign exchange student, the Classmate finds it difficult to make ends meet. He has a secret. To stay afloat, he became a recruiter for a club of wealthy businessmen with sadistic voyeuristic tendencies. With his good looks, charm, and ability to make friends anywhere, he seduces unsuspecting students and delivers them to his employers.

Goal: Find Noah and deliver him to the club.

THE PROFESSOR

While the Professor didn't make any waves as an author, he knew enough about the process to become a creative writing teacher at the local university. Ever since he read Noah's groundbreaking piece, he has been obsessed with the young man. The text and its author left him shaken to the core.

Goal: Find Noah and discover his secret.

The dramatic payoff of the story hinges predominantly on player character interactions. While their surface goal is the same – to find Noah – their hidden agendas were designed to create a climactic conflict, and it is important that they remain secret for as long as possible. The GM should keep that in mind at all times during play, and allow the real character motivations to remain obscure. It is also advisable for the troupe to reach Noah at the same time – even if they take different routes to accomplish the task.

The scenario works best if the team does not split, allowing for suspicions to flourish, however, each of the characters can get their own clues to follow if necessary.

Scenario theme

The theme of this scenario is the pursuit of divinity through passion. Each of the characters, including the NPCs, experiences passion in a different way, and for those who actively seek it, the search may prove to be an eye-opening experience. However, those who choose this path are equally at risk of touching divinity only to immediately fall from grace and succumb to a life of endless debauchery and elusive gratification. Debased, alienated and forever craving new stimuli, these characters are pushed to the margins of society, labeled as deviants, perverts or sexual offenders.

Tips for the GM

Sometimes it is essential for the GM to deceive not only the characters, but also the players. The lore in this chapter contains information contradictory to what you've read so far. This section also explains several of the scenes slightly differently than they are described in the scenario itself. While it is important for you as the GM to answer questions truthfully when the players succeed in a roll, you should also know the motivation of non-player characters and player characters alike – even before they know it themselves.

THE HORROR CONTRACT

Make sure all participants are familiar with the kind of game they will be playing. Downfall touches upon a number of themes (history of abuse, body horror, graphic sex, etc) which could make certain players uncomfortable or even upset. All players should be allowed to make an informed choice about the type of game they are about to play, and decide if they need to step out – this includes the GM. For more information, see *The Horror Contract* (*KDL*, p 160).

SETTING UP

Pitch the character options to the players. Mention that there are two ways to play each character: a "light" or normal version, and a "dark" or slightly more twisted version. Make sure all players are on the same page as to what sort of game they want to play with these characters.

An example how to describe the characters:

The Twin Sister – *Perceptive, alluring, and down-to-earth, the Twin Sister wants to find Noah at all cost. She is willing to make sacrifices to rescue him; however, with a limited ability to act under threat, she may require assistance from somebody more used to danger.*

The Girlfriend – *She may not look like much, but everybody who has spent a while in her company will notice that the Girlfriend is not to be trifled with. Attentive and resilient, she won't back down until she finds Noah. However, her bluntness and assertive personality may unsettle those around her.*

The Classmate – *There is something eerie about this sociable smooth talker, but nobody can really pinpoint what. He's a foreigner, so it might be the culture shock, or perhaps he's got something to hide. One thing is certain, the Classmate knows everybody worth knowing and can open doors to every party on campus.*

The Professor – *A creative writing professor whose students fight to be in his classes every semester. Sharp, outgoing and erudite, he receives invitations to most campus gatherings and private parties. Usually quick to notice a charged situation, he prefers to rely on his wit rather than brute force to address a problem.*

Once the players have selected their archetypes, give them time to complete the details (name, appearance etc) and ask questions. Bear in mind that some questions, especially those regarding the characters' backstories, should be answered in private.

CUTTING THE SCENES

Kult: Divinity Lost encourages cinematic play with focus on relevant scenes and very little time spent on unrelated side chatter. This technique allows for creating a quick-paced narrative which encourages players to stay grounded in the moment. This is where the horror can be found.

However, since this plot relies so strongly on player character relationships, the GM needs to allow a certain amount of chit-chat and bonding between characters. If an exchange contributes to character development or has the potential to reveal something important about one of the participants, let it unfold at its own pace and cut the scene when it feels most suspenseful.

SCENE BREAKDOWN

The breakdown contains more detailed outlines of the key scenes and events. For enhanced readability, the descriptions were divided into points highlighting atmosphere, relevant NPCs and core details.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

The scenes below provide several routes for finding Noah; however, the players may choose to explore more mundane avenues such as cooperating with the police, hanging posters, or sharing photos on the Internet. Use this opportunity to establish that the world is corrupt, rotten and biased, and that useful information comes at a price. This is not to force the character to follow the only "right" path, but to ensure that their road to the final discovery is challenging.

Some of the characters have supernatural abilities that may help them in the investigation. Remember that relying on these abilities puts the characters in a vulnerable position. Every time they delve into the ocean of the unknown, the player characters may stir a wave that will come crashing through their lives when they least expect it.

The City

The scenario was designed to be set in a big city with a sizable university campus and at least one shady or dangerous district. For writing convenience, all names of non-player characters and locations are in English; however, GMs are welcome to alter them and set the game anywhere in the world. Every city has its own unique personality, which may enhance the atmosphere of the game. Below, you will find several examples of cities with suggested themes and moods.

NEW YORK CITY

NY, United States: With its slender skyscrapers, iconic landmarks and busy streets, NYC lures visitors with a promise of life-changing opportunities and comfortable anonymity. A number of popular universities, as well as numerous fraternities and sororities, are scattered throughout the five boroughs, which provides the GM with countless possibilities. As the setting of many American movies, New York City's endless crowds and famous vistas will allow the players to feel at home, while constantly reminding them that violence is real and close by.

LONDON

United Kingdom: The first modern city to reach 1 million inhabitants. London blends futuristic design with a wealth of historical landmarks. Seekers of mystery and horror can delve into the city's past to find stories of hauntings, grisly murders, wretched poverty and the specter of disease. Here, posh gentleman's clubs exist side by side with contemporary party dens and venerable museums. Permeated with buried secrets and stolen lore, London is an attractive location to evoke an atmosphere of mystery and uncertainty.

WARSAW

Poland: Rebuilt almost from scratch after the Second World War, contemporary Warsaw is an amalgam of modern design and socrealistic architecture. Home to a 200 year old university, the city attracts foreign exchange students as well as young people from all over the country. It is a city where conservative ideals and traditional Catholic values frequently clash with movements towards sexual tolerance and multiculturalism. It is a good choice for those who hope to depict stark social contrasts and the ongoing struggle between progress and regression.

Timeline

Below you will find a timeline of events pertaining to Noah's disappearance. All times are relative to when the Twin Sister arrives in the city. This is not a set timeline – feel free to adjust as necessary for maximum dramatic tension.

8 weeks ago: Noah and the Classmate attend the party at Leigh's; Noah is accosted by a libith who impregnates him with a darthea through a kiss. His behavior begins to change.

4 weeks ago: Noah stops paying for his dorm room, abandons his job, drops out of most of his classes and has a falling out with his girlfriend.

2 weeks ago: Noah drops out of the Professor's class after submitting the final assignment. He goes missing afterwards.

1 week ago: All of the Twin Sister's texts and calls bounce from Noah's phone with a message saying: "This number is not in service."

Day 1 (present): The Twin Sister arrives in the city and arranges a meeting with the Girlfriend, the Classmate and the Professor. Noah concludes the preparation for his orgy, dramatically titled "120 hours of Sodom."

Night 1: The 5-day orgy commences in an abandoned building in a shady part of town. The local faction of Urban Elite (see the Antagonists section later in this scenario) becomes aware of the event. The characters get an opportunity to participate in a local student party.

Day 2: Noah begins experiencing the first birth pangs of the darthea. He retires to a closed off section of the abandoned building where he loses consciousness. The Professor meets with the therapist. The Classmate receives his new objective. The Twin Sister starts to experience an unusual sickness.

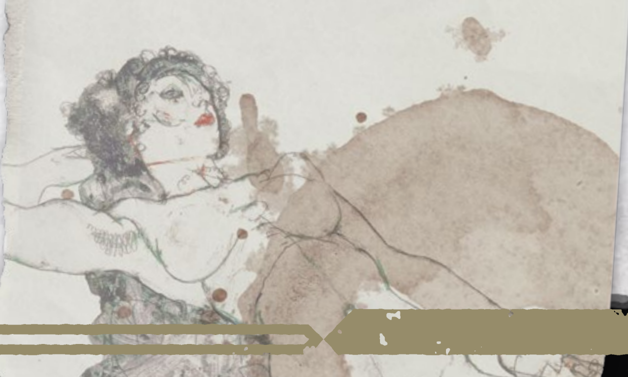
Night 2: The darthea's birth process is stalled by Noah's critical condition; the creature is threatened by the potential death of its host.

Everything smells of saliva and sweat. I wet my parched lips and become aware of the salty taste in my mouth.

Countless hands and tongues caress my skin, not sparing even the most private parts.

I vaguely recall I had a life once. School, job. Family? A jolt of pleasure shoots through my body.

Ah. It must've all been a dream.



PRELUDE

Before arriving in the city, the Sister did her research and managed to get in touch with the people who had been closest with Noah prior to his disappearance. All of these characters are affiliated with the university, therefore the campus area would be a good setting for the introductory scene. Consider a busy cafe, an empty hall after class hours, a park on the grounds, or the professor's office.

This is an opportunity for all the characters to meet and exchange information, as each of the locals has their own leads and theories regarding Noah. The player characters may choose to explore some or all of these leads. The order does not matter as each of them has the potential to push the story forward.

The Meeting

Themes: urgency, mystery, suspicion

Set pieces: clocks, deadline reminders, missing person posters, people waiting in the queue, recurring sound

Time: early afternoon

PROFESSOR'S CLUE: THE TRANSCRIPT

Noah's last assignment submitted prior to his disappearance was written on several pages from a visibly stained, tattered notebook. The pages were glued together, the handwriting was barely legible, and the ink blurred after something spilled on the paper. Initially, the Professor wanted to confront Noah on his sloppy work. Since Noah went missing, however, the Professor decided to read through the piece. He asked one of his assistants to type up a neater version, as close to the messy original as possible. The TA completes it right before the Professor's meeting with the Sister. See handout at end of scenario.

GIRLFRIEND'S CLUE: THE LOST AND FOUND

While looking for Noah, the Girlfriend found out that he is in arrears on his payments to the university. When he was declared missing, his belongings were packed and removed from the room to be temporarily stored in the dorm's 'Lost and Found.' Unfortunately, they can only be retrieved by Noah himself, or somebody who can prove they are his relative.

CLASSMATE'S CLUE: LEIGH

During a party at Leigh's, the Classmate saw Noah making out with an attractive girl. He does not know who she is, but he can contact Leigh, the host.

TWIN SISTER'S CLUE: THE CONNECTION

The Twin Sister knows her twin like nobody else. Inform the player that at any point in the game, they may ask questions pertaining to Noah's habits and personality. You as the GM should answer them truthfully, based on the Twin Sister's knowledge of Noah before his possession.She takes +1 *ongoing* while investigating places and items related to Noah. At the GM's discretion, this advantage can be extended to other rolls directly related to Noah's disappearance.

ACT ONE

Professor's Clue: The Transcript

Themes: uncertainty, lurking danger, fascination, strangeness

Set pieces: heat, smell of sulfur, arousal, sensation of being observed, pain mixed with pleasure

The transcript

The text is an erotic vision of Limbo, with bits and pieces missing – the teaching assistant was not able to decipher all of the damaged text. Written in the first person, it describes a passionate encounter of the protagonist with a tall, shape-shifting demon. See the handout at the end of this scenario for the opening paragraphs of this piece.

The effect: Reading the fragment has the effect of warping reality around the reader. The text radiates genuine Passion magic, thinning the Illusion's grasp on the reader. Anybody who reads or listens to the fragment experience the depicted scene in vivid detail. Affected player characters **roll +Soul**.

(15+) You are a part of the story, seeing what Noah has seen and feeling what he has felt. Fortunately, you maintain a distinct sense of self which allows you to take in the scene without losing yourself in the moment. Despite the experience being extremely vivid, you emerge with a clear recollection.

(10-14) You are a part of the story. Deep down, you know the experience belongs to Noah but the boundary between the two of you is blurry and beyond your control. You know what you saw, but Noah's emotions bleed into your mind and become entangled with your own (**-1 Stability**).

(-9) The vision is too ephemeral for you to grasp; yet, you can't help but feel exposed. What you did not see may have seen you (**-2 Stability**).

Girlfriend's Clue: The Lost and Found

Themes: anonymity, alienation, emptiness

Set pieces: students loitering about the campus, notice board, hospital-like curtains, pungent smell of cleaning detergent

NPCs: Noah's roommate, Receptionist, group of thugs

GM Note: Providing the characters have already read Noah's assignment (see above), it is time to start subtly warping reality in all the locations they visit. Let the dorm remind them of a hospital. Make hungover students look like cancer patients. Show a pregnant student reading in the lobby. Let the janitor be an older man with a limp. Also, play on the Classmate's paranoia and evoke a feeling of persecution. Allow this ordinary location to turn into a strangely sterile, unwelcoming environment.

Noah's belongings

Among the writer's everyday use items (clothes, textbooks, and the like) there is a small suitcase held shut by a complicated combination lock. The Twin Sister can confirm that it is not something Noah brought from home. The characters may either guess the code or destroy the lock. Inside, they find a USB drive with a number of explicit photographs of Noah, several books by Marquis de Sade, and a collection of sex toys designed with both pain and pleasure in mind. Together with the items, there's a leaflet from a local sex shop and a stained journal with several pages ripped out. It contains some of the young man's drawings, erotic dreams and visions. This is the same journal in which he wrote his last assignment.

- **The journal**: Browsing through the contents will produce an effect similar to reading the assignment, but without triggering the move. If the player characters have already read the short story, however, the line between Elysium and Limbo will continue to blur. The environment around the player characters seems to be both more sensual and more hostile at the same time. For fragments of the journal, see this spread. Some additional fragments can be found throughout this scenario.

Noah's Journal

Her harsh tongue slithers across my chest, leaving a trail of engorged veins under my skin. She presses herself into me, and I feel the heat of her soft, perfect body. I try to arch into her, satisfy the desire for movement that has burned inside me ever since she appeared, but her surprisingly strong arms push me back against the cross. I let out a disgruntled moan, trapped between her warmth and the cold, slick surface of the stone holding my limbs.

I can almost hear the rush of my own blood as her lips reach my neck. My craving for her flesh is so intense it seems almost physical, writhing inside me like an animal. I'm ready to beg, when her nails bite into my hips and rake their way up my sides. I cry out in painful ecstasy as drops of hot, red liquid lubricate her fingers. She pulls back, bringing them to her mouth to taste them. Her gaze drops to my groin, and I watch her eyes narrow maliciously, suddenly overcome with a mixture of anticipation and terror.

I can't keep writing this. It's too real. Those scars...

Today on the bus, I saw a girl with long nails. I got hard. What's wrong with my head?

I can't sleep. The craving never seems to go away. It's driving me mad. I keep looking for new ways to get myself off, but the toys are so expensive. I've rubbed my dick raw in the shower. I need something more. I don't even know. This need is growing inside of me. I'm afraid of catching something but...

I saw that video online. It caught my eye among the multitude of lewd thumbnails. I remember it wasn't exactly my usual thing but I decided to give it a chance. It made me so happy and whole, as if nothing about me was ugly, nothing was broken. I kept stroking myself and was filled with such intense love for myself. I cried when I came. The feeling left soon after. I've been looking for that video ever since. I can't stop.

I went to the room. I told myself I wouldn't, but the pining was so strong, I couldn't resist it. Fuck, that was stupid, but it felt so good.

I was alone for an hour, and I didn't think anybody would show up, but they did. Two, five, ten, I lost count eventually. And nobody said a word. They fucked me on the seedy mattress and against the walls. They pushed me, pulled my hair and bound me. I had so many people inside me, I feel filthy. But each and every one of them brought me closer to something. I can't describe it. Every orgasm was a moment of clarity I've never experienced before.

I feel this close to understanding... everything. I will go there again, soon.

It's weird to find somebody else's toy stash. Makes you wonder what they're into, even if you'd rather not think about it. I remember looking at that spiked dildo in awkward awe. It reminded me of an iron maiden, but with the sharp bits on the outside. I didn't really want to, but I picked it up. I examined it up close and it made me giddy, like it was promising me something. I shouldn't have but I took it. Gross, I know. But it's mine now, and that's none of your fucking business.

Shit. I think I may have caught something after all. I've been throwing up but only this weird black bile comes out. It sticks to my throat and I keep wanting to swallow but I can't. It makes me feel so full.

And I can't stop thinking about going back...

Fragments from Noah's Journal

Noah's roommate

The roommate has moved in only recently after transferring from another dorm. He has not seen a lot of Noah; the young writer would often spend his nights out of the room, much to the roommate's relief. He recalls seeing the young writer draw furiously at his desk or, if he was in for the night, get up from bed and leave the room for extended periods of time. He describes Noah as restless, irritable and creepy. He noticed signs of harm or disease on Noah's body – bruises, peeling skin, scratches and bulging, bluish veins. Once asked about it, the young writer claimed everything was fine, and started spending even more time out of the dorm. If pressured for more information, the roommate will reveal, with a great deal of shame and anger, that Noah tried to sexually assault him. He fought Noah off, but has never really recovered.

Classmate's Clue: Leigh

Themes: tension, being out of place, surveillance

Set pieces: high-class apartment in a posh district, tight security, polished surfaces, cleanness

Time: late afternoon as Leigh is too hung over to meet earlier

NPCs: Security guard, Leigh (Non-Player Characters)

GM Note: Draw attention to things that do not belong. Where the players expect to see shiny, polished surfaces, introduce cracks in the walls, mold, and dirt in the corners. Point out the abundance of cameras and describe how they trace the characters' every step.

The story

Leigh looks at you with bloodshot eyes, pondering your questions. He is holding a half-filled mug of coffee and you notice that his hand is shaking slightly. "Yeah, I know those girls. I have no clue how to find them," he answers, and you hear his voice quiver.

He puts down the mug and looks at you tensely. "Trust me, I tried."

The emphasis makes you believe him instantly. "Nobody knows where they are. Nobody," he mumbles, pacing around the room. It looks like the hangover has been the least of his troubles.

Leigh met the two attractive women at his party. They casually offered him a threesome and he jumped at the opportunity. Unfortunately, he genuinely doesn't know where to find them. He has tried multiple times – to no avail. During the conversation, he seems jumpy and nervous, picking at his skin and scanning the apartment. He may get upset or even violent if pressured too much or interrogated for too long. The characters may suspect that Leigh's condition is similar to Noah's. Should they provoke a physical confrontation, they notice that Leigh's body has been transformed in strange ways – his stomach is covered in bulging dark veins which form a vortex-like pattern, while his skin is inflamed and covered with a nasty-looking rash.

Twin Sister's Clue: The Dream

Theme: urgency, alienation, displacement, pleasure mixing with disgust, confinement

Set pieces: intense sensations (especially touch and smell), filthy walls, seedy mattresses, noises from elsewhere

GM Note: While describing the dream surroundings, use vivid sensual details that will help player characters identify locations in the real world later. If you mention the sound of a pneumatic drill or a large machine, place the abandoned building near a construction site. If you describe a colorful neon light invading the room, make sure the characters can spot that neon if they get lost.

Beyond the walls of sleep

Thud. Thud. Thud. Your body is throbbing with base urges your waking mind fails to comprehend. Crawling under your skin, growing inside of you – something wants to break free and, in turn, offer you freedom you have never experienced. You find yourself crawling across a rough surface, your joints cracking loudly. You desperately need something, someone, to satisfy your lustful cravings. Your stomach sags strangely, and you notice bloody pus oozing out of your belly button...

Whenever the Twin Sister falls asleep or loses consciousness, she experiences some of her brother's exploits. The dreams put her in Noah's skin, allowing her to feel what he feels–the pain of his transformation and the pleasure of his exploits. They may also provide additional clues regarding Noah's state and whereabouts. The images should become clearer and more persistent the closer the characters get to the end of the scenario, and they may lead to loss of **Stability**. Ask the player to **roll +0**/**Soul** as per the character's **Nightmares** disadvantage or **Dreamer** advantage (if the journey is voluntary) and present the dreams accordingly.

The plastic bag has been over my head for several minutes now and the panic overtakes me. But I am tied to the chair with duct tape.

I am sure death is coming but then I see it.

Through the condensation and in my blurred vision I see another world, another existence.

And I let myself drift into that experience.

The rocking motion reminds me of a time before everything. I float, succumbing to it.

My eyes open and I drift blissfully through the chaos of creation. My mind buzzes, fusing with the infinite oneness that surrounds me. The man on top of me grunts and the movement stops. I'm back in the cheap hotel and his seed drips down my thighs.

Optional Scene: Visiting a Local Party

Themes: carefree abandon, freedom, permissiveness, pleasure that comes at a price

Set pieces: loud music, physical proximity, people making out, screen showing photographs and short videos, drugs

The carnival of flesh

The spacious room is bathed in vibrant light from the colored bulbs. Heated bodies grind against one another in a musical trance. A projector displays snapshots of kissing couples, naked people, and BDSM gear on a screen behind the DJ. You are about to move on to the next room, when the picture changes and you have to do a double take. You could swear that the gagged man in the previous photograph was Noah. But no, it must have been someone similar. Perhaps you need a drink to loosen up?

Following the meeting with Leigh, players may be tempted to attend one of the local parties to try to gain more information. While the students should not be able to provide any useful details about the demon (the lilith), the scene should serve as an opportunity to make reality ripple, mixing images of casual debauchery with the sights of Limbo. Make the characters understand that there is disease and corruption lurking in this den of delight. Let the dancers' bodies, beautiful at first, appear twisted, with elongated limbs and crooked spines. The bartender's handsome hands are pierced with rusty hooks, blood dripping into the drinks he prepares – or are they? Keep your descriptions varied. Mix the sense of danger and disgust with the allure of closeness and human contact. Tempt the characters with opportunities for easy gratification and reward them for acting on their urges. Somebody who makes out with a player character spills an explicit story about Noah's adventures in the shady part or town in-between bites. Leaflets advertising the "120 hours of Sodom," are scattered in dark corners. Player characters with heightened sensitivity should experience flashes of memory from people who have interacted with him.

I screamed and screamed and screamed when my body was being torn apart.

The nurse kept telling me to push and I did. With all that was left of me. I did.

A machine beeped next to my ear, inducing a soothing trance. Beep, beep, beep. Your body is your prison, I heard it whisper.

Escape, now.

ACT TWO

Act II provides clues as well as complications. It is a build-up towards the third act where the characters have to face the consequences.

Professor's Clue: The Temptation

It's time to explore the Professor's relationship with his therapist and give the character an opportunity to succumb to his passions. Start the scene casually, let the therapist ask a few ordinary questions about work and personal life, and then begin to delve deeper into the character's problems. Make it clear that the therapist shouldn't know the details the Professor is seeking, but she seems to be asking suspiciously pointed questions. Once the character realizes that something has gone awry, let reality shatter. The therapist is now the demon from the Professor's visions, and she promises him sexual gratification, knowledge or even Noah himself, if only he agrees to delay his companions. She will not reveal her reasons. If the offer is rejected, the GM should make sure that the character feels her wrath in Act III.

Girlfriend's Clue: The Sex Shop

The employees at the sex shop remember Noah. They say that he has changed a lot between his first and last visit, but he did not appear coerced or threatened. Just... really enthusiastic. After some persuasion, they divulge his purchases: suspension harnesses, gags, whips, chastity belts – the list goes on. One of the invoices they produce also contains a delivery address different from the student dorm. The locals will know that the address is in a shady part of town, full of unsavory characters.

The employees can share that it seems like Noah ended up in what is called a "sub-frenzy" in the kink scene. This happens when a person who is very new to BDSM becomes very excited after the initial experience and seeks to replicate it with very little protection or self-preservation. The frenzy is similar to the onset of an addiction.

Classmate's Clue: Tempus Fugit

The Classmate's employers have become aware of Noah's predicament, and hope to obtain the newborn darthea for their occult practices. The character will be approached by a representative of the cult with a new objective: bring Noah if he is found alive, and if not, search for a baby near Noah's body. No further details will be provided, and it is up to the GM to decide how accurate the cult's knowledge is regarding darthea.

If the Classmate feels outmatched or incapable of fulfilling the objective alone, the cult will readily present blackmail material to convince the Professor to do their bidding.

Twin Sister's Clue: The Abomination

As the time is running out, the Twin Sister will begin to experience some of the symptoms of Noah's corruption. Use this opportunity to blur the line between body horror and the natural uterine cycle, even if the character happens to be a cisgender male. Have the Twin Sister experience painful, abdominal cramps, joint aches and itching in embarrassing areas. You may also try to evoke symptoms frequently associated with pregnancy, such as nausea, dizziness, and bloating. While there will be no visible signs of a change, the discomfort will gradually intensify and resist traditional remedies.

120 hours of Sodom

If the players somehow miss other clues, let one of them find an advertisement for the event. Photocopied on cheap paper in various colors, the leaflets include date, time and a short tag line: "It is always by way of pain one arrives at pleasure – Marquis de Sade." At this point, any elegance or subtlety has fled Noah.

ACT THREE

In this act, the characters need to deal with the consequences of their previous actions, as well as overcome other obstacles deterring them from finding Noah. This is where the protagonists stumble and get hurt while the GM makes hard moves to test their determination. The players and the characters need to be aware that if they stall or waffle in any way, Noah will die slowly and painfully.

The Choking Harness

It is high time the Classmate's **Controlled** or **Harassed** Disadvantages caught up with him for good. A visit to the shady parts of the city provides for many opportunities to enact the threats posed by the environment. A group of violent racists, a run in with a stressed and hyper vigilant local gang, or a bunch of corrupt police officers who insist on arresting him all present potential dangers. Play on the character's paranoia and introduce a bizarre twist to this scene in order to keep the distinction between the Disadvantages unclear. Perhaps the scene is being observed by a suspicious third party or one of the assailants reveals a tattoo which hints that they may be in service of a higher power.

The Spurned Fiend

If the Professor rejected the demon's offer or failed to sabotage the search, the fiend will unleash her wrath. Rather than dealing physical harm, the lilith will attempt to terrify or inconvenience the party in order to stall them. Everybody except for the Professor ***Sees Through the Illusion***. The Professor's attempt should be considered an automatic fail. For the GM, it is the moment to look back at the choice the player made at the beginning of the game and exploit it to the fullest. If the character has a blank in his memory, fill it with the worst possible version of the past. If he has trouble containing his lascivious thoughts, reveal his lewd fantasies about his students (specifically Noah) to the rest of the group.

GM Note: Instead of showing what happened in the past, ask a series of provocative questions that will imply what the character did and prompt the player to answer. "What did it feel like when that dainty blond sucked you off to get a better grade?", "How did you plan to seduce Noah?", "Why did you always have to hide an erection while Noah was reading his assignments?", "Who died at that frat party you can't remember, and why didn't you save them?"

The Bitter Truth

The Girlfriend is brutally reminded of the hurt she suffered from Noah. She receives an anonymous message, threatening to reveal damaging information about her to the public if she continues her investigation. The blackmail may be anything from pornographic photographs to fragments of conversations taken out of context. The player have to ***Keep it Together***. On a *failure* (-9), as a part of the Hard Move, the GM may ask the following questions:

"What was the most humiliating act you engaged in while dating Noah?", "Despite everything, what do you still love about Noah?", "How are you responsible for the hurt that happened to you?", "What is the worst thing one could do to break you now?"

The Monstrous Birth

The Twin Sister's symptoms will worsen the closer the party gets to Noah's location. These will range from abdominal pain, to shortness of breath, to severe cramps. By now, these are coupled with vague but disgusting visions of bodily harm – suckling orifices, fractured bones, and unnatural growth. Avoid specifying that the images pertain to Noah and allow the player's imagination to fill in the blanks. Ask the Twin Sister's player to ***Keep it Together***.

The Guilty Pleasure

The characters go to the address which appeared on the invoice from the sex shop or on the leaflet advertising 120 hours of Sodom. They find the building which, at the first glance, seems abandoned. However, a closer inspection reveals signs of activity – music, screams, moans, thumping of feet, and jingling of chains. The ground floor is mostly empty and littered with syringes, food packaging, blankets and tattered clothes. As the characters move towards the sounds of the ongoing orgy, reality becomes increasingly unstable, starting to resemble the landscape of Noah's dreams rather than the building they entered.

GM Note: The characters may opt to ***Act Under Pressure*** to keep their grasp on reality, rely on their **Enhanced Awareness** to be able to navigate through both, or ***See Through the Illusion*** to focus on the world beyond.

ENTERING SODOM

The door is closed, and in front of it sit three pretty young men on their knees, chained together by a set of thick leather collars. Hearing your approach, they turn towards you. Before you know it, the three-headed beast charges. You see the glistening saliva dripping from its massive jaws as the infernal dog lurches at you, determined to tear you to shreds.

From then on, focus on the duality of the world but do not explain its source. Make the player characters question what is real and what is a figment of their imagination. Echo images the characters may have witnessed during the Carnival scene, this time making the pain and punishment very real. Show images of sinners in hell and make the characters question whether the moans they hear reflect pleasure or pain.

The characters go through an ordeal of collapsing staircases, dead-end corridors, locked doors, and distant horrors only half-seen. If they choose to fight, do not reveal whether the beings they are facing are human or not. The real reckoning will come later, when they realize their hands and clothes are smeared with blood, and the building is full of corpses.

Possible highlights:

- Cauldron – *People writhe and gyrate in a hot tub. Their moans and shrieks mix with the sounds of the water boiling and sloshing. For a brief moment, it looks as though they're being boiled alive in a cast iron cauldron full of oil. Are they part of an orgy or burning in hell?*
- Cages – *People of all genders are locked in small cages, pleasuring themselves in a strange frenzy. When one of them stops or collapses, the bars of the cage turn into sharp wires that whip them until they continue.*
- Mass – *One of the main orgy rooms, where people hump and rub against each other in a hypnotizing rhythm. Their flesh literally fuses together, creating monstrous beings with multiple limbs and heads that continue to whimper and groan in unison.*
- Glutton – *A tall, gorgeous woman is flaying pieces of skin from a beautiful young man. She feeds them to a group of hungry dogs lapping at her feet. Her victim sighs and croons in delight with every cut.*
- Owner – *A muscular man holding a branding iron stands at the far end of the room. The shape at the end of the iron resembles a sickle with an encircled teardrop in the middle. There's a row of human silhouettes bent by the wall. Their wrists and ankles are tied together. In silence, they wait to be owned.*

THE LAST BREATH

As the characters finally break through the orgy and get closer to Noah, the Illusion falls over their minds once again. They remember the beings below, whoever they were, as human. Had they resorted to violence, the monstrous wails become pleas for mercy, and the bite marks resemble hickeys. Characters who trust reality as it is and acknowledge their brutality **lose 1 Stability**.

Noah can be found in one of the small rooms on the upper levels of the building. A makeshift lock, a few heaps of clothes, a mattress, a digital camera, and a notebook will tell the players that this is where he must have lived for the past month. The room is filled with a strange and rather unpleasant smell, like sulfur mixed with the musky odor of a human body.

Noah is unconscious and naked except for a t-shirt on his mattress in the corner of the room. Upon closer inspection, he betrays signs of extreme physical strain and exhaustion. He has become considerably thinner, his skin is dry and peeling, his hair is greasy and sticking to his face and neck. The body is dotted with numerous abrasions, black veins, cuts and unnatural, pulsating swellings. His stomach appears unnaturally engorged, as if he had been starving himself. If the characters manage to bring him back to consciousness he may try to speak, but his jaw is dislocated and slacking. There are traces of blood visible on his thighs, and, if the characters roll him over to look, his anus is visibly stretched and torn.

GM Note: From the description it should become clear that it is up to the characters to call the shots, as Noah is unable to decide for himself. It is time for their individual agendas to come into play. The birth of the libith will not occur unless Noah is taken to the hospital for recovery or healed with the Classmate's supernatural ability.

The Birth of the Libith

A wordless scream tears its way out of Noah's lungs as his body spasms violently, his spine cracking and bending in the process. Lying down, he bends his knees and arches his back, pushing his hips up to expose his dripping, erect penis. Hot tears roll down his cheeks as he sways back and forth in a grotesque act of imaginary copulation, as if an invisible force was fucking him from the inside.

The bulge in his stomach expands, revealing a round shape moving beneath, pressing against the skin until it becomes thin and almost transparent. Noah shakes violently but his body is transfixed in the unnatural pose as the bulge moves downwards, fracturing bones and rupturing tissue. Blood mixed with a strange, black pus flows down his thighs when his stretched anus rips, and a dark shape begins to emerge. The man lets out one last cry of ecstasy before he finally collapses, having given birth to the abomination of his dreams...

LIBITH

As it emerges, the libith is a humanoid shape, slightly smaller than a newborn baby. Its moist and slick skin is opalescent dark blue with patches of purple and black. The creature is covered in blood and other bodily fluids which emit a pungent, sulphuric smell. Its oval head does not have eyes or a nose, but a large puckered hole which contracts at regular intervals, from time to time revealing a flicker of a long, slimy tongue. Its abdomen is dotted with two rows of fleshy nipples. From its back emerge two long, throbbing appendages reminiscent of intestines which untangle and perk up, facing the same direction as the head. Between its legs is a set of genitals, a complicated mix of penis, vagina, cloaca, and something else, all of which are disproportionately large and pulsating.

ENDING

The ending will depend entirely on the resolution of the final scene in Act III. Below are a few possible endings.

Noah dies

The Girlfriend manages to execute her revenge, or Noah dies for any other reason. Describe the corpse as oozing and squirming and push the body horror to its limits.

Noah is healed by the Classmate

The moment the Classmate uses his gift with enough success to stabilize the young writer, the birth process will commence, and the characters will be left to face the newborn libith.

Noah is taken to the hospital

Much like the previous one, except the monstrous birth will be delayed by at least a couple of days. If the process occurs without witnesses, the libith may assume Noah's form to possess the sister. Alternatively, Noah is taken to the operating theater as the doctors suspect he may be hemorrhaging; the libith is born, but nobody lives to tell the tale.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Noah Vaughn

Noah was a talented young man from a small town. Friendly, idealistic and naive, he was at first intimidated by the big city. Soon enough, however, he settled down and found a part-time job in a cafe. Then came a blossoming relationship with the Girlfriend, a challenging class with the Professor and a new friendship with the Classmate. Ever the romantic type, Noah's stories have always been filled with lofty ideas, magical thinking, and positive messages – until recently, when they've turned darker.

- Appearance: late teens, mid-length, dark blond hair, green eyes, tall and slim, of average built; no tattoos or piercings (at the onset of the story)

Leigh Steward

A law student from a well-off family, Leigh lives in a posh apartment downtown. He is known around the campus for hosting lavish parties and inviting the most popular and influential students. His events are as much regular drinking events as they are networking opportunities. Just like Noah, Leigh was possessed during the party, but in his case the progress of the "disease" is considerably slower.

- Appearance: early 20s, good-looking, average height, short, rust-colored hair, blue eyes; dressed in designer clothes, usually smart casual
- Meeting Player Characters: Leigh's appearance will differ considerably from the above. He may open the door dressed in a stained bathrobe, unshaven, and with his hair in disarray. The possession has been taking a toll on his day to day routine.

Darthea

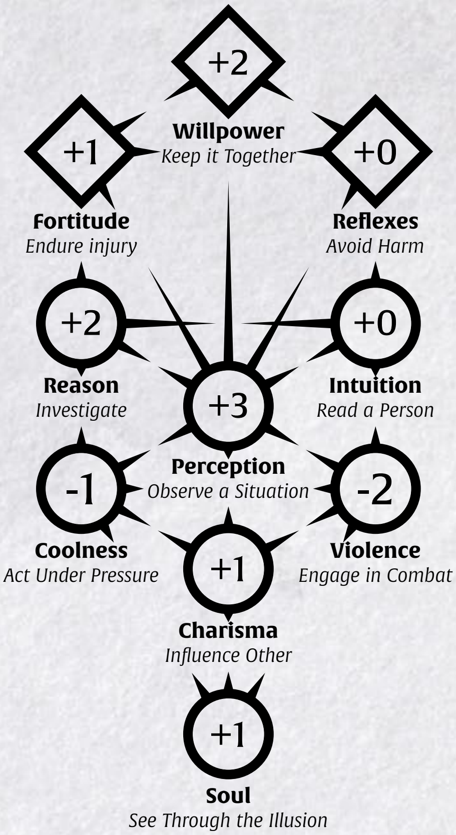
Born out of humanity's desire for sex, a darthea is the embodiment of perversions dwelling between Limbo and reality (see the ***KULT: Divinity Lost*** Core Rules for more details). In this story, the creature is bestowed upon Noah by a libith, and must be nourished with the young writer's exploits in order to be born into Elysium. However, while Noah's body displays signs of disease as the darthea grows stronger, he cannot die until the entity is ready to emerge as a libith – a new physical shape existing within the Illusion (See the Chapter Beyond Passion in the Core Rules for more information about the darthea and the libith). If the host becomes too weak, the birth process will halt until the "mother" dies or recovers. Should Noah die, the darthea will perish as well.

Urban Elite

Several influential alumni of the local university belong to the Urban Elite (see the Core Rules page 258 for more details). While establishing the cult years ago, they pledged to exclusively recruit students of their alma mater for their sexual exploits. Hiding behind a network of goons and intermediaries, they use underprivileged students such as the Classmate to find their victims – or even as victims themselves. On the surface, the organization caters to wealthy fetishists who can afford to live above the law. In reality, they are heavily influenced by the Death Angel Gamaliel, and their perverse rituals serve to appease their patron.

Consider the cult to be well aware of everything occurring at the university and having vast influence in law enforcement, administration and banking. Their means of harassment will range from causing credit card failures to sending aggressive police officers after the characters. Their occult knowledge is above average, but not infallible. The information they provide may be slightly inaccurate or completely wrong.

THE TWIN SISTER



Wounds

Serious Wounds (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

■ *Composed*	
☐ *Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐ *Unfocused*	–1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐ *Distressed*	–1 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Neurotic*	–2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐ *Irrational*	–2 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Unhinged*	–3 to Disadvantage rolls
	+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐ *Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Name

Apperance

Clothing: casual, practical, colorful, small town fashion, preppy, mismatched, or feminine clothes

Face: cute, innocent, weary, sunken, pale, familiar or friendly

Eyes: determined, tired, restless, inquisitive, curious, evaluating or concerned

Body: curvy, dainty, short, tall, chubby, robust or thin

Who you are

You have always been close with your brother. As twins, you've shared a bond that allowed you to communicate without words. You could always tell when Noah was sad or hiding something from your parents, and all you had to do was ask to learn the truth. You complemented one another. When he was daydreaming, you were down to earth. When he was emotional, you were rational. There was no obstacle you couldn't overcome together.

When Noah moved away, you knew he would keep in touch, and he did. You were privy to almost every aspect of his academic life, knew the names of his professors and friends, and were the first one to learn about his new girlfriend. You had no doubt that your bond would endure the long distance.

But then things changed. At first, you weren't worried. A few missed calls, an unanswered message, several photographs with people you haven't heard about. You thought your brother was slowly easing himself into the city life, making new friends and gaining new experiences. But that was before the dreams began...

You remember that long night when you woke up drenched in sweat, with your heart hammering inside your chest. Something had happened to Noah, you could feel it under your skin. At first, you hesitated, trying to convince yourself that perhaps you just had a bad dream. There was no point calling him because, surely, at this time of the night, he was already asleep. You agonized until the sky outside turned gray, and at last, you grabbed your phone.

Noah was fine, but the sensation of looming danger never left you. You were plagued by strange, elusive nightmares that, although you could hardly remember them, left you restless and exhausted. You tried to share your concerns with Noah but, for the first time in your life, your brother brushed you off. Something was wrong.

And then, he disappeared.

You know that

Noah's girlfriend is willing to help you search for him. She doesn't know what happened, but she promised to try to learn something before you arrive. You can stay with her when you visit the city.

Noah was particularly fond of one of his professors and spent considerable time working with him. You emailed him and he agreed to meet you.

Thanks to Facebook, you identified one of Noah's new friends. You know he accompanied your brother to a party the night your nightmares began.

Disadvantages

Nightmares

You have recurring nightmares connected to your twin brother. *During a scene when you sleep* **roll +0**:

(15+) You sleep in peace.

(10–14) The nightmares torment you. The GM may make a Move for your nightmares. For example, you are unable to sleep at all during the night (*–1 ongoing* until you sleep), something follows you back into reality, the nightmares provide you insight into the Truth, or you are forced to process some trauma (***Keep it Together***) when you wake up.

(–9) The nightmares take over completely. You are trapped in the dream until you find a way to wake up, and everything that happens there also directly affects your sleeping body.

Jealous

You have always been the most important person in your brother's life, and a part of you feels threatened whenever somebody gains his affection. You cannot stand the thought that the two of you may grow apart. *Whenever something appears to jeopardize your relationship with your brother*, **roll +0**.

(15+) You remain in control of your jealousy and can act rationally.

(10–14) You have an urge to inconvenience or otherwise discredit the source of your jealousy (*–1 ongoing* to ***Keep it Together*** in the same scene as the source).

(–9) You are consumed by your jealousy and you have to ***Keep it Together*** to avoid acting on your violent urges. Your obsession cannot be assuaged while the target remains in the same scene with you.

Dark Secret

Strange disappearance – Your brother has become involved in suspicious activities and disappeared. You have no idea what happened but you've been plagued by disturbing visions urging you to find him. You begin to question your grip on reality but you can't let anybody notice that.

Forbidden love – Your feelings towards your brother are not purely sisterly. You have been struggling with your incestuous desire ever since you entered adolescence, and it's tearing you apart. Your brother's disappearance made you realize that you can't live like this any longer. (Applies only to ***The Lustful Sister***)

Choose one Personality Option

- **The Loving Sister:** You genuinely care for your brother and want to help him. Find him at all cost and make sure he is safe.
- **The Lustful Sister:** Your feelings towards your brother have always had a tinge of something more than pure sisterly love. Learning that Noah found himself a girlfriend hurt you deeply, and you've been struggling with the desire to confess your true feelings. Now, you want to find your brother and discredit his girlfriend, so he understands that you are the only one worth loving.

Notes

Advantages

Dreamer

Together with your recurring nightmares came a new ability. You've become a dream wanderer. When you want to meet someone or find out the truth about something while you sleep, **roll +Soul**.

(15+) You meet the intended person or arrive at the specific place in the Dream.

(10–14) You meet the intended person, or arrive at the specific place. However, some element has changed, or something followed you or the person in question.

(–9) You are lost in the Dream and cannot wake up until you find your way back.

Protector

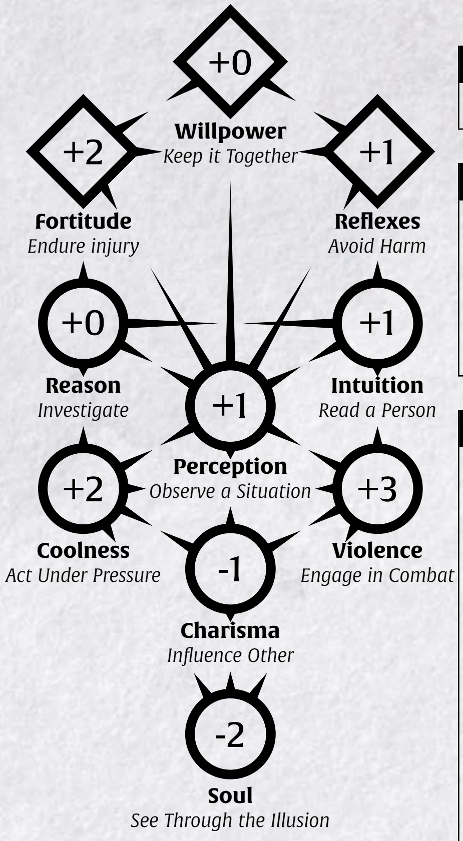
You have *+2 ongoing* to ***Endure Injury*** when you protect someone. At the GM's discretion, the advantage may be used while dreaming.

Keen-eyed

Whenever you ***Observe a Situation****, you may choose from these questions, in addition to the ones normally acquired:*

- What weaknesses do they have I can use to my advantage?
- What strengths do they have I should watch out for?

THE GIRLFRIEND



• Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

• Stability

■ *Composed*	
☐ *Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐ *Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐ *Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐ *Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
	+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐ *Broken*	The GM makes a Move

• Name

• Apperance

Clothing: casual, designer, oversized, alternative, boyish, bohemian, or trendy clothes

Face: beautiful, memorable, boy/girl next door, sharp, expressive, ruddy or intimidating face

Eyes: dark, clear, lively, piercing, judging, hard or suspicious eyes

Body: petite, athletic, robust, voluptuous, lithe, slender or emaciated

• Who you are

When you met Noah, he was an idealistic dreamer with a head full of ideas. He captivated you with his simple optimism and honesty, so rare in the city where you grew up. Being his very first girlfriend made you feel special and his lack of experience reminded you how to savor every stage of a budding relationship. Before you realized it, you were in love.

Unfortunately, things began to change when, during the second semester of his studies, Noah made a new friend – The Classmate. At first, you were glad to see him branch out and find somebody to hang out with when you were busy, but after a while you noticed that Noah's creativity had been channeled in a particular direction that appeared to erode what you adored in him the most – his innocence.

Gradually, your romantic dates with long, tender foreplay turned into abrupt and wild adventures. Something had come over Noah that made him insatiable and aggressive. You realized that the control was swiftly slipping out of your hands. From a patient guide, you've turned into an object existing only to satisfy his desire. He was no longer the Noah you used to know.

And then, he crossed the line. He exploited you and abused you, and you still wear the scars of your final encounter. You fled and patiently collected the broken pieces, forging your pain into anger. You've sworn to make him pay for what he'd done, but before you could exact your revenge, Noah disappeared.

You thought your lust for justice would remain unfulfilled, but then fortune smiled upon you. You received a message from Noah's twin sister, asking if you know what had happened with her brother. It appears she hasn't heard about your break up. She is coming to the city to find Noah, and you will be more than happy to help her. You invited her to stay with you during her visit.

• You know that

Noah stopped paying for his dorm room and eventually, the staff removed all his personal items. They are currently stored in the dorm's Lost and Found but only Noah himself or a family member of his could access them.

Disadvantages

Oath of revenge

You have sworn to avenge yourself. Noah has broken you and he has to pay for the suffering you had to endure. You will show no mercy. *When the target of your vengeance, or someone or something who belongs to it, appears* **roll +0**

(15+) You remain in control of your vengeful nature and can act rationally.

(10–14) You can't focus on anything, other than the target of your vengeance. Take *−1 ongoing* until the target's involvement in the scene ends.

(–9) You become obsessed and can act only to further your revenge. Doing anything else requires you roll ***Keep it Together***. Your obsession cannot be assuaged while the target remains in the same scene with you.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

You suffer from distressing flashbacks, restlessness and periods of insomnia. *At the start of the first session and when you go through difficult experiences* **roll +0**

(15+) Your condition is under control.

(10–14) The GM gains 1 hold

(–9) The distress is overwhelming. The GM takes 3 hold.

The GM may spend Hold to make a Move for your PTSD. For example, trigger debilitating flashbacks or temporary memory loss, introduce hindering physical symptoms or put you at social disadvantage due to persisting anxiety.

Dark Secret

Victim of crime – You have endured a terrible crime. Your whole life is marred by this event and you cannot mentally suppress the violation, no matter how hard you try. Fear, shame, anger, and a sense of helplessness torment you, and in order to survive this trauma, you must find a way to heal your wounds. Get revenge on the perpetrator.

Choose one Personality Option

- **The Vengeful Ex:** Find Noah and exact your revenge. You want him to suffer as much as you have suffered. You won't be satisfied until you have your share of his pain.
- **The Cruel Ex:** Find Noah and exact your revenge. Should you fail, make his sister suffer for his crimes. You know he loves her dearly, perhaps more than he had ever loved you. Seeing her in pain is bound to make him hurt.

Notes

Advantages

Rage

When in combat, you may awaken your inner rage. Lose **Stability (−1)** and mark 1 Rage. Every time you get a wound and every time you defeat a foe, increase Rage **(+1)**. Rage lasts until the end of the combat. During combat, you may spend 1 Rage to choose 1 Edge:

- **Brutal assault**: take **+1 Harm** to your attack.
- **Ignore the pain**: take +2 to ***Endure Injury***.
- **Lost in frenzy**: shake off and ignore psychological or supernatural influence.

Instinct

Whenever you ***Observe a Situation*** and act on the GM's answers, take +2 instead of +1.

Survival instinct

Whenever you suffer a serious or critical injury yet refuse to yield, **roll +Violence**. *On a success, you may temporarily ignore the effects of the injuries, but you will need treatment to stabilize them as soon as the time limit expires:*

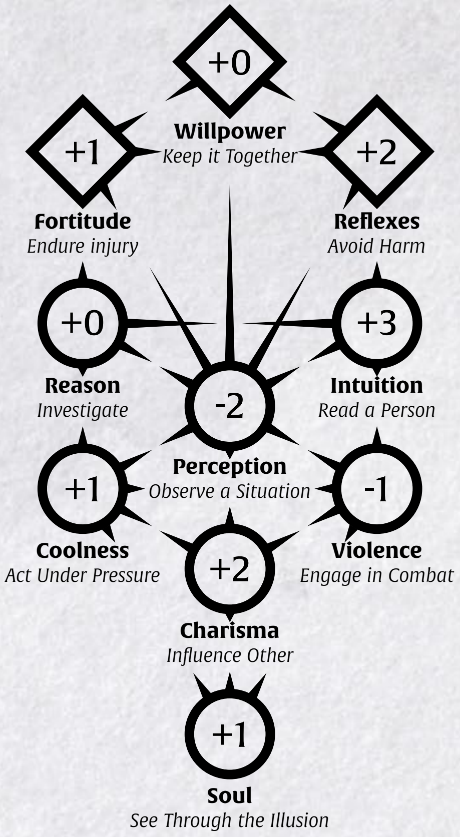
(15+) You ignore your injuries until the conflict is over, as well as choose one:

- **Viciousness:** *+1 ongoing* **to *Engage in Combat* rolls for the remainder of the fight.**
- **Adrenaline rush:** *+1 ongoing* **to *Endure Injury* rolls for the remainder of the fight.**

(10–14) You ignore your injuries until the conflict is over.

(–9) You overexert yourself and after a few moments your injuries cause you to pass out and collapse. After your next action, the GM decides when and how you pass out.

THE CLASSMATE



Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐
☐
☐
☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐

Stability

■ *Composed*	
☐ *Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐ *Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐ *Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐ *Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
	+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐ *Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Name

Apperance

Clothing: trendy, casual, second-hand, alternative, hipster, nondescript or bohemian

Face: handsome, memorable, mysterious, friendly, inviting, honest or sharp

Eyes: predatory, warm, empathetic, deep, vibrant, languishing or puppy

Body: athletic, tall and lanky, robust, chubby, sculpted, feminine or sensual

Who you are

You are a foreign student who was lucky enough to win a scholarship to a renowned university overseas. Despite your hard work and sincere efforts, you quickly realized that studying abroad is more expensive than you'd expected and it had become increasingly difficult to make ends meet and keep up with your studies. Things were getting dire when you received an offer you could not refuse.

You've become a recruiter for a local club where wealthy men pay large sums of money to watch live sex shows. These are not simple voyeuristic parties with willing performers, though; the club requires a steady stream of naive or innocent young people to participate as (often unwitting) performers. To make the affair even more tricky, all participants must be students at your university. Luckily for you, however, finding the right candidates fetches you generous rewards that solve the majority of your financial troubles.

You met Noah at the beginning of the new semester. He was perfect: an innocent, naive dreamer with a head full of ideas and not a single mean bone in his body. You couldn't have hoped for a better specimen. You made an effort to befriend him and gain his trust. You learned about his family, his girlfriend, his hopes for the future. Little by little, you reeled him in. It was almost too easy.

To seal your bond, you invited Noah to a party, taking advantage of the fact that his girlfriend was otherwise occupied. Reluctant at first, he agreed, and at the end of the week you found yourselves immersed in a crowd of dancing, drinking and carousing students.

There, distracted by a problematic acquaintance, you momentarily lost sight of Noah. You were not sure how much time had passed but, at last, you found him kneeling on the floor, peeking into one of the bedrooms through the keyhole. The sounds coming from the inside told you exactly what caught his attention. Satisfied to have gained an embarrassing secret, you removed yourself quietly, waiting for Noah to return.

That's when the problems began. After the party, Noah changed. He became impatient, questing, curious. He was constantly pondering ways to explore his sexuality and gain new experiences. You often heard him fantasizing about a tall, beautiful woman, and you couldn't tell if what he was saying was a fact or a figment of his imagination. Things were looking bad for your assignment, and there was little you could do about it.

And then, to make matters worse, Noah vanished.

Not long after, you received a message on Facebook, from a woman you realized to be Noah's twin sister. She's coming to the city, and she wants your help in finding her brother.

Your delivery is due in three nights. You have to find Noah or provide a suitable substitute, otherwise your employer is going to be greatly displeased.

You know that

Somebody at the party saw Noah making out with a stunning, tall woman. You asked around, but none of your close acquaintances knew who she was

You were told that Leigh, the host on whom Noah spied at the party, may be able to give you an idea of who she is.

Disadvantages

Harassed

For some reason you are harassed by your environment in general and the authorities in particular. *At the beginning of the session and when you draw attention to yourself*, **roll +0** to see if you're in danger.

(15+) You managed to avoid danger

(10–14) The GM holds one

(–9) The GM holds three

The GM can spend a hold to make a move for your persecutors. For example, someone destroys your property, you are attacked by someone who hates your minority, the authorities take something away from you (rights, property, assets), someone you care about is in trouble because they spent time with you or you are denied your rights because of who you are.

Controlled

You work for an organization that supervises and controls you. Your assignment is secret and you know that the consequences for betraying or disappointing your employers will be severe. You have *-2 ongoing* to all actions that may damage your employer's interests.

Dark Secret

You have been tasked with delivering a prospective candidate for the organization's next meeting. You must protect your charge and make sure they are ready to be collected on the agreed date and time. Should you fail to fulfill your duty, you risk not only your financial stability but also your freedom.

Choose one Personality Option

- **The Troubled Recruiter**: The club asked you to fetch Noah and prepare him for their next gathering. At first, you were eager to please them, tempted by the generous prize. However, as your pretend friendship developed, you realized that deep down you like the guy. It gave you hope that, perhaps, you are not as wretched as you thought yourself to be. You were glad to see Noah forgo his innocence, and encouraged him to pursue that path, hoping that your employers would lose interest. However, now that he's disappeared, you began to wonder what he actually got into. You fear that, should the club learn of your attempted sabotage, you may be in trouble.
- **The Heartless Recruiter**: Realizing Noah's potential, you presented him as a suitable candidate for the club's purposes. You could pat yourself on the back for the great advertising job you have done, as the prize offered for delivering the boy proved to be exceptionally generous. Unfortunately, now that he is gone, you have no time to waste. You need to find him, and if not him perhaps his sister could be offered to the club.

Notes

Advantages

Enhanced Awareness

When you focus your senses at a location where the Illusion is weak, **roll +Soul**. On a success, you have visions about the place and may be able to speak to entities tied to it:

(15+) You can discern clear details regarding the location.

(10–14) You get some basic impressions regarding the location.

(–9) The Illusion tears. The veil is lifted temporarily, revealing an alternate dimension – the GM determines which one. The PC could be sucked into it or something may cross over into our reality. The GM makes a Move.

Healing Hands

You can mitigate damage without medicine or bandages. When you lay your hands on a seriously or critically injured person, **roll +Soul**.

(15+) The person stabilizes and heals one level of damage

(10-14) The person stabilizes

(-9) You see through the illusion and learn a dark secret of the person. The injuries remain unchanged.

Prepared

Whenever you investigate a location prior to visiting it, **roll +Reason**:

(15+) Choose three options.

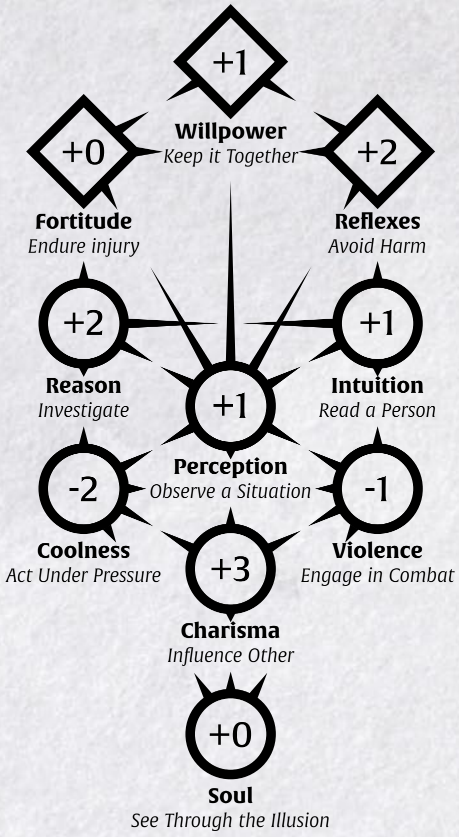
(10–14) Choose two options.

(–9) Choose one option, but you have missed or overlooked something crucial. The GM takes 1 Hold, which can be spent at any time to make a hard or soft Move for the location.

Options:

- Find or create a map of the location.
- Uncover any security systems and other obstacles.
- Pinpoint the location of something you're after.

THE PROFESSOR



Name

Apperance

Clothing: smart casual, elegant, casual, youthful, old-fashioned, trendy or humble clothes

Face: youthful, angular, expressive, mature, wrinkled, captivating or handsome face

Eyes: smart, piercing, lively, gentle, hypnotizing, tired or absent eyes

Body: sexy, lithe, slender, supple, graceful, wiry or squat body

Who you are

Your student years were a colorful period. You experimented in search of inspiration, and your exploits were many and varied. Once you wandered through everything that was both enticing and legal, you strayed into a more dangerous territory, believing that it was only by direct experience that your fiction would come to life.

Unfortunately, an endless stream of rejection letters forced you to realign your perception. Instead of a writer, you chose to become a literary critic and write for journals and magazines. At last, your works started getting published and your sharp, insightful reviews gained you respect among your peers. You were offered a teaching post at the university, which you accepted as a more stable addition to your daily routine.

You always considered it ironic that, of all the people, you were the one they selected to teach creative writing. On the other hand, your years of experience allowed you to spot which of your students had a chance to make themselves known. Noah was one of them.

Initially, you didn't give the young writer much credit. Yes, he had rough potential, but his lack of experience made his texts shallow and trite. His unfaltering enthusiasm, however, encouraged you to give him a chance. It rekindled your sense of purpose, and so you discussed his work after class, suggesting improvements and giving him the best advice you could muster.

You noticed a breakthrough the evening you started grading his world-building assignment. In less than 3,000 words, Noah managed to paint the most vivid, riveting description of hell you have ever read. The details made your hair stand on end, and you found yourself staring at the text, unable to snap out of the vision. You felt something in your memory stir, like a familiar string that had not been played for a long time.

Under different circumstances, you would have accused the young writer of plagiarism, but you had no doubt that the text was Noah's. Prompted by the strange hunch, you accosted him after class to inquire about his inspirations, but were rebuked, to your great surprise.

During the next couple of weeks, you were treated to a stream of dark and sensual visions that held you captivated after each reading. The texts had a spark you have never managed to achieve yourself, and you have become increasingly desperate to know why.

Before you had a chance to ask again, Noah stopped attending your classes. Unable to give it a rest, you made a few calls but nobody could give you any definite answers. Then, you received an e-mail from somebody claiming to be Noah's sister, and your hope was rekindled...

You know that

Prior to his disappearance, Noah submitted his last handwritten assignment. The text was scribbled on a few pages of a tattered, stained notebook, and you refused to grade it. You wanted to use the opportunity to confront Noah but missed your chance. Hearing from the sister, you asked one of your assistants to type up the manuscript in order to search for clues. You haven't read it yet, but the transcript is ready.

Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

■ *Composed*	
☐ *Uneasy* ☐ *Unfocused*	**Moderate stress:** −1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Shaken* ☐ *Distressed* ☐ *Neurotic*	**Serious stress:** −1 ***Keep it Together*** −2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Anxious* ☐ *Irrational* ☐ *Unhinged*	**Critical stress:** −2 ***Keep it Together*** −3 to Disadvantage rolls +1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐ *Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Disadvantages

Repressed Memories

You have repressed a particularly unpleasant event from your past, but the memory of it sometimes rises to the surface. *In situations associated with your repressed memories*, **roll +0** to determine if the memories resurface:

(15+) You continue to suppress the memories.

(10–14) The memories partly resurface, taking the form of flashbacks and/or hallucinations. You must ***Keep it Together***.

(–9) You are overwhelmed by your repressed memories, completely losing yourself to them. The GM makes a hard Move and you reduce **Stability (–2)**.

Haunted

You are haunted by supernatural forces. With the GM's assistance, determine the nature of what you believe is haunting you. *In the first session and whenever you are distracted or weakened,* **roll +0** to see if the entity gains power over you:

(15+) The entity leaves you alone.

(10–14) The GM takes 1 Hold.

(–9) The GM takes 3 Hold.

The GM can spend Hold to make a Move for the entity. For example, it requests a service from you and threatens retribution if you refuse, the entity possesses your body for the night, or the entity reveals a clue of what it is and what it wants from you.

Advantages

Enhanced Awareness

When you focus your senses at a location where the Illusion is weak, **roll +Soul**. On a success, you have visions about the place and may be able to speak to entities tied to it:

(15+) You can discern clear details regarding the location.

(10–14) You get some basic impressions regarding the location.

(–9) The Illusion tears. The veil is lifted temporarily, revealing an alternate dimension – the GM determines which one. The PC could be sucked into it or something may cross over into our reality. The GM makes a Move.

At any Cost

Whenever you truly desire something, you may take +2 to a roll by decreasing **Stability (–2)**.

Library of Oddities

Throughout your career, you assembled a library of peculiar sources covering myths, legends and superstitions.*When searching for information about something supernatural,* **roll +Reason**:

(15+) You may ask two questions from the list below.

(10–14) You may ask one question from the list below.

(–9) Your sources are unreliable. Ask two questions; one of the answers is untrue.

Questions:

- What strengths does it have?
- What weaknesses does it have?
- Where does it come from?

Dark Secret

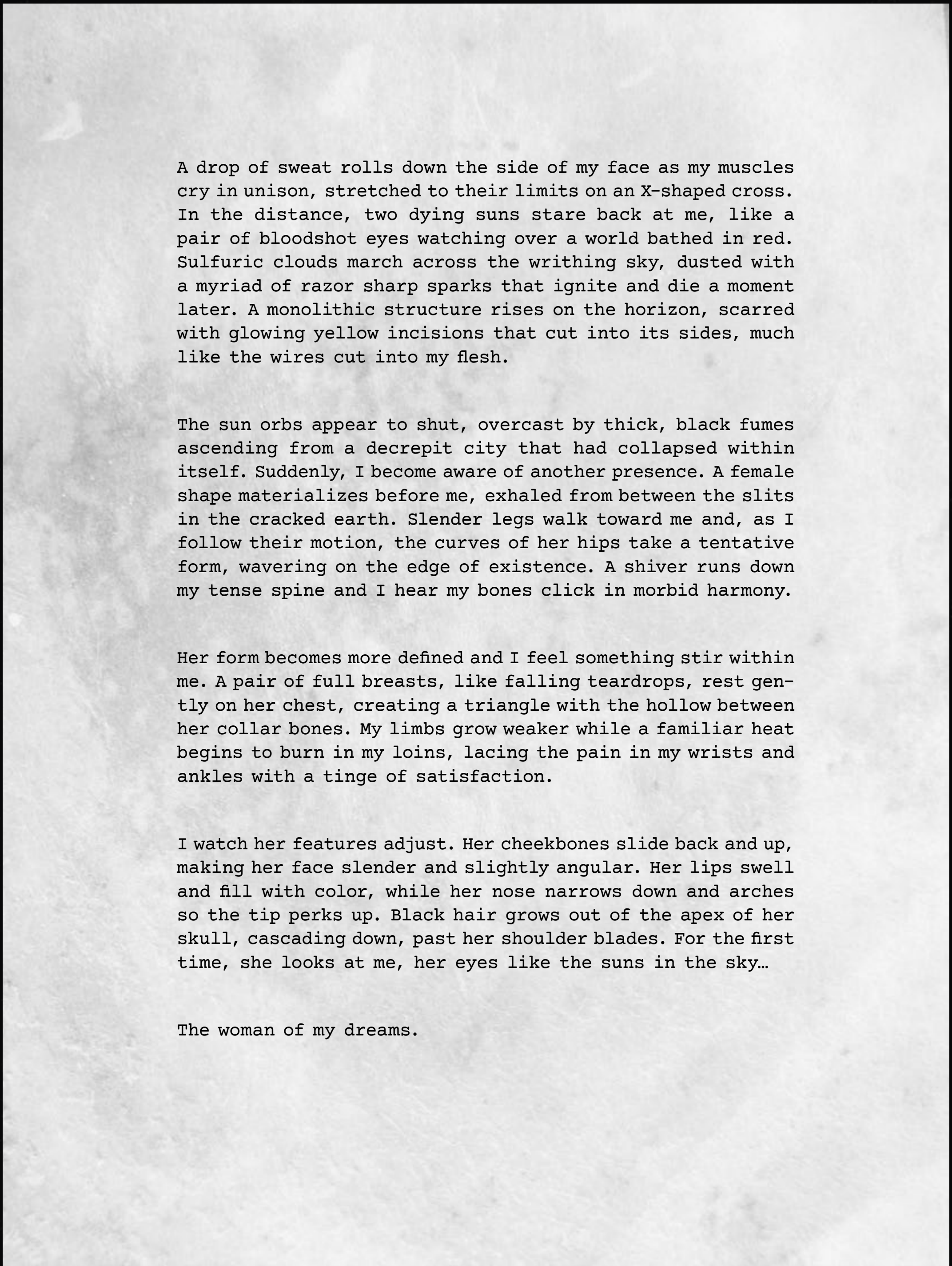
Your youth was a very colorful period. You worked hard to test your limits and broaden your horizons, seeking some kind of intangible enlightenment. At last, your eyes were opened, but only for a brief moment. Terrified by the horror of the revelation, you recoiled from your epiphany. You don't remember what you did or saw, but you feel that something malicious has lingered at the edge of your perception ever since. You feel that Noah has the key to your repressed memories.

You lust after Noah. You've been unable to focus on your work since you heard about his disappearance. You have never laid a hand on the boy, but you have an inkling that one or more of your academic associates may be aware of your previous misdeeds, and may try to use your obsession to discredit you. You must tread carefully. (Applies only to ***The Alluring Academic***)

Choose one Personality Option

- **The Questing Scholar**: You feel that, somehow, Noah achieved a breakthrough that passed you by when you were younger. You vaguely recall a moment in your life when you shied away from a risk that could propel your future career. You were not even aware of the blank in your memory until Noah's writing struck that familiar chord. You have to find him and learn everything he knows. Until then, the only person who is aware of your problem is your therapist.
- **The Alluring Academic**: Handsome and still in your prime, you are not impervious to the temptations of daily life. You've slept with some of your students, and casually flirted with some others – nobody here is underage after all. However, ever since you have read Noah's groundbreaking piece, you can't stop thinking about him. The text filled you with thirst which no other tryst could quench, and it took your whole willpower not to act on it, as rumors about your conduct started to spread among the faculty. You have been seeing a therapist to address your problems, but you do not know if you are getting anywhere. Regardless of your preferences, the lust you feel towards the young writer is out of control. You absolutely have to find him.

Notes



A drop of sweat rolls down the side of my face as my muscles cry in unison, stretched to their limits on an X-shaped cross. In the distance, two dying suns stare back at me, like a pair of bloodshot eyes watching over a world bathed in red. Sulfuric clouds march across the writhing sky, dusted with a myriad of razor sharp sparks that ignite and die a moment later. A monolithic structure rises on the horizon, scarred with glowing yellow incisions that cut into its sides, much like the wires cut into my flesh.

The sun orbs appear to shut, overcast by thick, black fumes ascending from a decrepit city that had collapsed within itself. Suddenly, I become aware of another presence. A female shape materializes before me, exhaled from between the slits in the cracked earth. Slender legs walk toward me and, as I follow their motion, the curves of her hips take a tentative form, wavering on the edge of existence. A shiver runs down my tense spine and I hear my bones click in morbid harmony.

Her form becomes more defined and I feel something stir within me. A pair of full breasts, like falling teardrops, rest gently on her chest, creating a triangle with the hollow between her collar bones. My limbs grow weaker while a familiar heat begins to burn in my loins, lacing the pain in my wrists and ankles with a tinge of satisfaction.

I watch her features adjust. Her cheekbones slide back and up, making her face slender and slightly angular. Her lips swell and fill with color, while her nose narrows down and arches so the tip perks up. Black hair grows out of the apex of her skull, cascading down, past her shoulder blades. For the first time, she looks at me, her eyes like the suns in the sky…

The woman of my dreams.

Transcript of the Writing Assignment

Handout for the Professor

HELL IS OTHER PEOPLE

GET INTO THE CAR.

You'll be the passenger.

I'll drive you through the city tonight.

I'll show you all your ripped backsides.

I will show you just how hollow you are.

And I'll show you just how much you all long for love.

And redemption.

Maybe it's not too late.

Just get into the car.

INTRODUCTION

This entire scenario takes place in the backseat of a limousine chauffeured by The Driver, and is meant for three players to finish in under 4 hours.

The Driver is the GM's character. As the grand narrator of this tale, they will reveal information the characters don't know about themselves while winding up the drama more and more. The Driver talks to an invisible audience, sets the scenes, and describes the stakes. The audience are the players and one by one they are invited to take a seat in the limousine until they are all along for the ride. Even then, the Driver speaks as if there is an audience and reveals all the hidden truths about the characters at the same time as they learn about them.

The Driver is tall and dark skinned; androgynous and attractive in a slightly disturbing way. They wear a black suit and have nails to die for. They have a rich seductive voice and seem to be taking notes throughout the drive. Sometimes they talk to no one in particular, sometimes they put up post-its on the dashboard.

The Driver is a servant of Gamaliel and has mysterious insights into people's secret drives and desires. They know your search history and what keeps you awake at night. They even have an idea of what you dream about.

Role-play the Driver as part talk-show host, part therapist and part flamboyant cult leader. Laugh loudly at the most inappropriate times.

Any attack on the Driver will result in the Driver steering the limousine over a cliff or into a building, killing all passengers. The Driver will politely point this out if the players try to threaten them.

The Limo

The limousine has two rows of seats in the back, facing each other. It's all white leather and luxury. The minibar has an impressive assortment of alcohol, as well as some snacks and an orange medicine bottle filled with an assortment of opioids and antidepressants. Smoking is encouraged.

The Driver controls the television in the back of the car. The Driver also controls the light, sound and bulletproof partition between the back and front seats. When the partition is up, the Driver can speak to the passengers throughout a crackling intercom. The Driver can hear the passengers when the partition is up, but does not have to pay attention to them.

Should the characters try to escape the limousine at any point, the door opens easily, only to show that the car rides along the edge of a thousand-foot drop. Alternatively, hundreds of begging and filthy hands try to pry the door further open. Whatever that is out there is far more dangerous than what's in here.

Cellphones do not work properly in the back of the limousine. Attempts to access social media or the wider internet show images of an endless, dark cityscape the characters somehow recognize. GPS and mapping services show the characters being in improbable places. Characters cannot text, phone or in any other way contact anyone outside the car. This includes emergency calls.

Feel free to play the intro to Iggy Pop's "The Passenger". A lot.

THREE OBJECTS

Beside the contents of the mini bar there are three objects in the back of the limousine.

- A battery powered power drill, fully charged and fitted with a half-inch wide bit [**2 Harm**]. It is the same kind that was used to kill actress Sandra Black's character in the splatter flick "Horny Home Invasion".
- A BDSM posture collar made of high-quality black leather and set with rhinestones that spell out "Loretta's Pet". Fits all necks and comes with an elegant leash. Once taken on, it does not come off.
- A two-liter dark brown glass-vial full of a clear liquid. It is labeled "sulphuric acid 98%". The liquid is actually just water, but the characters don't know that.

Starting the Scenario

Only the Driver is allowed to speak at first. Players may read their character sheets, but not comment until invited to do so.

First, the Driver describes how the limousine glides throughout a glittering hi-tech downtown. There are skyscrapers and neon lights everywhere. Billboards flash by and scenes from new horror movies play out on huge screens. It is raining and everything is glittering and shiny. The rain washes away the smell of human misery and hides people lurking in the alleys.

MEET THE BISHOP

The Driver stops in front of City Hall and invites Bishop Saint-Clair into the limo. The Bishop's Player is invited to engage with the Driver. The Bishop ordered a taxi and was not expecting a limo.

As the Bishop takes his seat, the Driver points out that the Bishop is very correct in that this is not the taxi he ordered – then they start asking questions:

How did the meeting go?

Will the city council fund the new church? The Driver thinks the Bishop will get the funding. Especially now since Morgana Masters supports him.

The old monster loves you, Bishop. Is it your stance on abortions that does it for her? Or your piety? Or your strict, still handsome looks?

The Bishop needs to get to Morgana Masters' reception. We'll get there. Let's first talk about the Bishop's two problems.

The Bishop's Problems

The Bishop is being blackmailed. Someone sent the Bishop photos of the Bishop and his lover Laurent. These pictures leave little to the imagination. Never mind how the Driver knows this, what the Driver finds touching is that the Bishop actually loves Laurent very much. The blackmailer has not yet stated what he wants, but he has explained that the Bishop needs to follow his orders or the pictures will be shown to the world, "in all their carnal ugliness." What would Morgana the Monster say about that? She is one of those people who believes "any such crimes against nature" should be cured with electrical shocks and "conversion therapy".

It gets worse. The second problem is that the Bishop has discovered that Loretta, a porn producer that Laurent works for, has made some kind of deal with a demon of lust known as Gamaliel. A real demon. She claims she has sold her soul and there are reports of strange things going on in her studios. The Driver is curious if the Bishop actually believes in the demon. If he doesn't, is it bad enough that Laurent is in Loretta's crosshairs?

Who would the Bishop kill?

If I could kill any one person you wanted, the Driver asks, who would it be? The Driver asks the Bishop to explain his answer, and turns the conversation to the anonymous blackmailer regardless of what the Bishop says. How does it feel when this unknown person reduces your love to "carnal ugliness"? Remind the Bishop of the three objects in the car.

Suddenly the Driver interrupts the conversation with this conundrum. "See those two over there. Let's say the car loses control. Should I aim for the woman with the stroller, or the drunk in the gutter? These heavy limos are harder to control than people think."

The driver will run over the person the Bishop choses. The car bounces as it runs over the victim(s).

If the stroller is hit, the Driver informs the Bishop the child in the stroller would have grown up to be a saint, and that the drunk collects skulls of homeless women, all in honor of Gamaliel. If the drunk is hit, the Driver informs the Bishop that the child in the stroller will grow up to be known as the Ripper of… someplace… sacrificing people to Gamaliel. The drunk was a hardworking Emergency Medical Technician trying to save everyone and punishing himself for his failures.

Phone Call from Morgana

The Bishop's phone rings. It is Morgana Masters, the Monster. She wonders why the Bishop left the meeting in such a hurry. Were they not supposed to go to the reception together? The Bishop must convince her that everything is ok, and that he will be at the reception in an hour or less.

Meanwhile, the Driver turns on the TV and shows the Bishop some gay porn while he speaks to the Monster. Muscular biker-types. The Driver points out that this film shows up a lot in the Bishop's search history. Incidentally, this particular feature, "Grindr Gods III", has been shot by Laurent, his lover. He is good. Almost so good it doesn't seem like staged porn anymore. "Art must challenge our perceptions, " as Laurent likes to say.

Oh, and there's a clip with Sandra Black the Bishop also has watched. Once. She is one of the top erotic actresses right now, and she's thrown her lot in with Loretta. One hot little thing, don't you think?

MEET THE ACTRESS

The Driver describes an endless labyrinth of little houses. Small boxes, all the same. Happy people who are wealthy enough to buy houses inside gates. Fit people jog on the sidewalk. Little old ladies bring cakes to their neighbors. The smell of barbecues and swimming pools fills the air. People seem so happy.

The Driver now introduces the "adult entertainment superstar" most people know as Sandra Black . The Actress's player is invited to engage.

Narrating to no one in particular, the Driver reveals that the Actress is the Bishop's daughter, another thing Morgana the Monster does not know about. Their relationship has been cold for a while, but now the Bishop also withholds Sandra's inheritance from her deceased mother, until "he can be proud of her". Sandra has come to ask her father for the inheritance. What can she do to make him proud?

Let the characters talk.

Questions for Sandra

The Driver interrupts the uneasy reunion at appropriate moments with the following questions:

Sandra, can you even give up your career? Especially now that you've recently made a deal with Loretta for six films. Loretta takes good care of her talent; she protects them, and she's promised Sandra to help her with a stalker.

What did Sandra have to give Loretta for such a fantastic deal, besides that lock of her hair? Yes, the Driver knows all about the lock of hair. How Loretta joked and said it was a token of Sandra's submission.

What does the Bishop think? Didn't the Bishop have some information on Loretta that Sandra would find interesting?

The Stalker and his Deeds

Should we talk about that stalker? Why not? There's a stalker, didn't the Bishop know? You two must talk a bit more often. The Driver asks Sandra and the Bishop to discuss three things the Stalker has done.

The stalker sent Sandra a jar full of semen. It was labeled "I have so much love for you".

The stalker sent Sandra photographs showing how he had been in her hotel room going through her luggage while she was in the shower. He wrote "being near you this way thrills me to my core."

He sent her a dash-cam shot of Sandra walking home. She was very dressed down and obviously trying to avoid public attention. Off-camera, the stalker goes on about abducting her and breaking her to make her prettier.

Rate them and then we can compare the results. Let the players talk.

Who would the Actress Kill?

The Driver asks Sandra: if you could kill any one person (or have Loretta kill them), who would it be? The Driver asks Sandra to justify her answer and turns the conversation to the Stalker. Do you remember what he once wrote? "True love must challenge our perception of love."

Those two over there. Grey suit and pinstripe suit. Regular Joes. Suppose I lost control over this heavy car. It might just happen since I'm distracted. Which one should I run over? The Driver will run over the person Sandra chooses. The man's head shatters against the window shield.

The Driver says that he wishes he could tell Sandra that it mattered which one of the men that got run over, but no. They were both pretty normal people. Took care of their families, respected by their friends. Pinstripe's favorite Sandra Black film was the "XXX Game of Thrones" thing. Grey suit had no favorite as long as Sandra got it long and hard. Carnal ugliness and all that. In the grand scheme of things, the universe could not care less about them.

The Death of the Mother

Remind them of the three objects in the car, and the fact that Sandra's mother and the Bishop's wife died recently. It was from a perfectly normal yet tragically sudden heart attack that had nothing to do with her simultaneously discovering her devout husband's homosexuality or her only child's secret career as the next it-girl of porn. Sandra should inherit quite a lot of money, but the Bishop put an end to that. The Driver ask, "is it true, Bishop, that the will says Sandra won't get a penny unless she "repents"? Or did you make that up? What does "repent" mean anyway?"

MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

The Driver describes a rundown inner-city area. Almost every house is abandoned or boarded up. Corner shops have metal grates on the windows. Strange things lie in the gutter. This is not a good neighborhood. Stop now and the car will get jacked. Still, we have to stop.

There is a new guest. A friend of the Bishop's. The Driver lets Laurent into the car. A guy Sandra also happens to know from Loretta's company -- and as it happens, the Bishop's lover.

Laurent's player may now engage with everyone else at the table.

So, how do you know each other?

The Driver asks the Bishop and Laurent to explain to Sandra how they know each other, how they met and how they fell in love. One thing is clear: Laurent came on to the Bishop. The Bishop felt lucky to have been singled out by someone so young and handsome. The Driver continues the walk down memory lane by asking what made Laurent fall for the Bishop. Was it his looks, which aren't that bad, or that he's older, or that he's a priest? Laurent has always had a thing for priests. Breaking them to make them prettier has worked both ways.

Gift to Loretta?

Laurent, the Driver asks. What did you give to Loretta? A lock of your hair? Did she make you kiss something ugly and bitter-tasting? Is she telling the truth about wanting to make porn so good is not porn? "Porn that challenges our perception of art."

Can Porn be Art?

Can porn be art? The Driver asks the characters in turn. Can art be porn? Play some high-brow TV-show about culture. Quote famous writers. Good statements get applause (from an imagined audience) and the Driver gives the best performer acknowledgment. Remind the characters of the three objects in the car. Remind them about the stalker and the blackmailer.

Who would the Photographer Kill?

The Driver pulls down the partition and asks Laurent, "if I could kill any one person you wanted, who would it be? Let's take those two over there. Handsome older black man in a suit and a girl in a cheerleader's outfit. Suppose I lost control over the car. Huge cars are not as safe as people think. They are also very lethal. Which one should I run over?"

The driver will run over the person Laurent choses.

If the girl gets killed, the Driver informs Sandra that the car just killed a struggling single mom who worked three jobs and several side hustles to keep her kids fed and in school. The older man is wanted for things he did in the Rwandan Civil war. Sacrifices to Gamaliel and other horrible things. If the man in the suit dies, the Driver mentions the man's four decades of tireless work to find cures for rare diseases. The girl, on the other hand, stalks and kills sex workers for being a "blight on the city".

"That was so much fun it challenged my perception of fun," the Driver says.

Carnal Ugliness and the Stalker

The Driver starts to read out loud from a tabloid where Laurent talks about carnal ugliness, challenging perceptions and destructive forces in art. How things must be broken in order to be beautiful. The Driver asks Sandra and The Bishop how they feel about this? Breaking things, they mean. By the way, who said he wanted to break Sandra to make her prettier?

The Driver reminds the Actress of the things the stalker has done to her. That jar of semen, was it not carnal ugliness? Going through Sandra's clothes "to challenge the notion of nearness"? And, "breaking you to make you prettier"? Laurent, don't you mix up love with some kind of compulsion?

TIME FOR TALK

The Driver understands that their passengers have some things to talk about and raises the partition. Let the characters discuss things.

Blackmailer Pictures

After a while, the Driver shows a slide show of the blackmailer's pictures. The pictures are actually very well shot considering that they were taken by a remotely-controlled camera. Remind the Bishop how Laurent pushed him to that spot of light in the alley, ostensibly because he "wanted to see him better".

Meet the Rage Thing

Suddenly, the car is driving through some sprawling Southeast Asian city. The traffic swerves violently, and the Driver has to use the horn a lot. Faces press against the windows, trying to look into the car.

"Driving must challenge our perception of driving." The Driver laughs.

The Driver says that the passengers must have questions, and will answer one from each. The replies are repeatedly interrupted by someone or something on the back of the car that is banging and making sounds. The Driver yells at the thing to shut up, but does not explain what it might be.

On the Road to Loretta

The Driver goes on. "I thought we would go and see Loretta. She lives in that beautiful mansion, up in the hills. Sandra, you remember that place, right? Was it *Horny Home Invasion* that was shot up there? Loretta invited you all in for the weekend and it turned into a movie." The Driver thinks the erotic thriller genre ought to have died after Basic Instinct, but still. Porn to challenge the notion of porn and all that. Was it then that Loretta asked for that lock of hair? Regardless of what Sandra replies, the Driver comments on Sandra's amazing lack of survival instinct. "A bit like your father, no?"

"And Laurent? You were also involved in *Horny Home Invasion*, right? You've been up to the mansion a lot, right? Loretta sure knows how to party. I've seen your pictures from up there. The Bishop sure has read all about it. His search history suggests an almost unhealthy interest in Loretta's parties.

Sandra, can you guess which one of these two that has watched your parts in *Horny Home Invasion* the most times? And how many times?" The Driver comments on Sandra's answer before telling her that her father saw the whole film once. Laurent saw the whole thing once, too – and he saw Sandra's part with the power drill over 200 times. "You're a sick boy, Laurent."

The Rage Thing

Suddenly a pale and inhumanly long arm breaks out from behind the back seat. A shrill voice screams "I WANT TO BE LOVED" while the arm thrashes about, seeking the characters. A brief fight ensues while the characters force the hand back into the trunk. The gamemaster should use the fight to force the characters to help each other. In the middle of the commotion, Morgana Masters once again calls the Bishop. Where is he?

The Driver stays out of the fight. When it is over, they mention that The Rage Thing might just be each character's worst nightmare. The dirty priest from when Laurent was a kid? Sandra's mother to whom she never was good enough? Or is it Morgana the Monster? Does she worship Gamaliel in secret?

Who will meet Loretta?

There is no city outside anymore. Just ruins. The car is going slightly uphill. Past cactuses. Past a man digging a hole in the ground in the darkness.

Anyhow. Loretta.

One of you has sworn to serve her. (Sandra. She has signed the papers and gave away that lock of hair.)

One of you has vowed to sacrifice to her. (Laurent. Though he might have not realized that yet.)

One of you has sworn to save a soul from her. (The Bishop. Either soul will do.)

"This is the deal," the Driver says. "When we leave Loretta's, there will only be two of you in the car -- apart from your new friend in the trunk, of course. So, what do you say?"

It is now up to the characters to sort out what will happen next.

"Who will stay and be sacrificed? What does that mean? Do I look like Loretta? You will be broken until you become prettier or something. Let me know when you have an answer. Knock on the partition. This will be an interesting challenge for you all. Good luck."

The Driver soon comes on the intercom and asks if the characters have decided yet. The Rage Thing is upset. It screams for Mom and Jesus and makes the rear seat shake. The Driver says they are thinking about unleashing The Rage Thing into the back of the limo again if the players do not get on with deciding. Both arms this time. It wants to cuddle.

Before the players can decide, the Driver has a new idea. The characters will vote for who to sacrifice. Vote in secrecy. The Driver hands out a notepad and a pencil to each character and asks them to write a name and pass it through the partition.

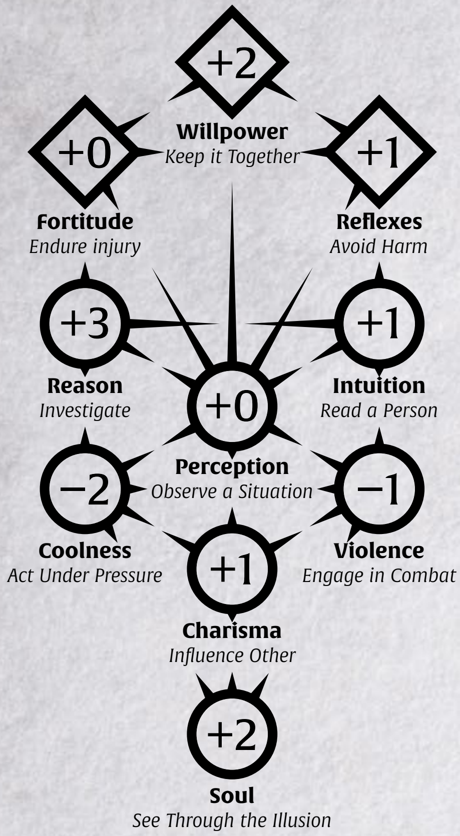
When the Driver receives all votes, they have arrived at Loretta's place. The limousine stops and the Driver opens the votes and reads them. But do not tell the players.

"Loretta will be pleased" the Driver says. "And so will Gamaliel."

Lights out.

THE BISHOP – YVES SAINT-CLAIR

Attributes


+2
Willpower
Keep it Together
+0
Fortitude
Endure injury
+1
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+3
Reason
Investigate
+1
Intuition
Read a Person
+0
Perception
Observe a Situation
−2
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
−1
Violence
Engage in Combat
+1
Charisma
Influence Other
+2
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

■	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Appearance

Man of power. Suit. Aristocratic face. Piercing eyes. Energetic body.

Relations

LOVES Laurent the photographer.

HATES his daughter's lifestyle.

Dark Secret

Forbidden Knowledge: Your daughter's boss Loretta, a porn producer, has made a pact with a being named Gamaliel. Some sort of demonic entity. Yes, a REAL, Demon.

Disadvantages

Sexual Neurosis: Your feelings for younger men often get the better of you. Like with Laurent.

God-fearing: You are sure the scriptures should be obeyed. To the letter. And you know that you are a sinner.

Motivation

STOP your daughter from embarrassing you. Your future depends on that.

CONFESS your love to Laurent. You are ready to take risks for him.

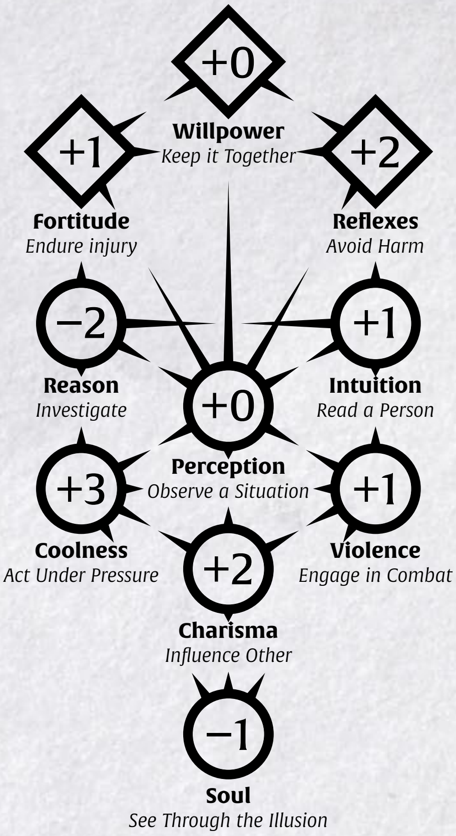
TAKE DOWN Loretta's porn empire.

Items

A medal of St. Jude of Lost Causes.

THE ACTRESS – SANDRA BLACK (ANETTE SAINT-CLAIR)

Attributes


+0
Willpower
Keep it Together
+1
Fortitude
Endure injury
+2
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
−2
Reason
Investigate
+1
Intuition
Read a Person
+0
Perception
Observe a Situation
+3
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+1
Violence
Engage in Combat
+2
Charisma
Influence Other
−1
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Appearance

The fun party girl. Stylish clothes. Youthful face. Mischievous eyes. Petite body.

Relations

DISLIKES Laurent the photographer.

NEEDS her father's love.

Dark Secret

Heir: Your father withholds your inheritance from your mother. You need to win his trust and love.

Disadvantages

Greedy: You would never let love or friendship stand in the way of your career. You don't care what they say.

Liar: As you see it, truth is very much a matter of perspective. Your daddy always did the same.

Motivation

STOP the stalker. Your sanity depends on that.

WIN your father's love. You need the inheritance.

PROVE to Loretta, your new manager, that you will be the star of her stable.

Items

A panic button set into a stylish wristwatch.

Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

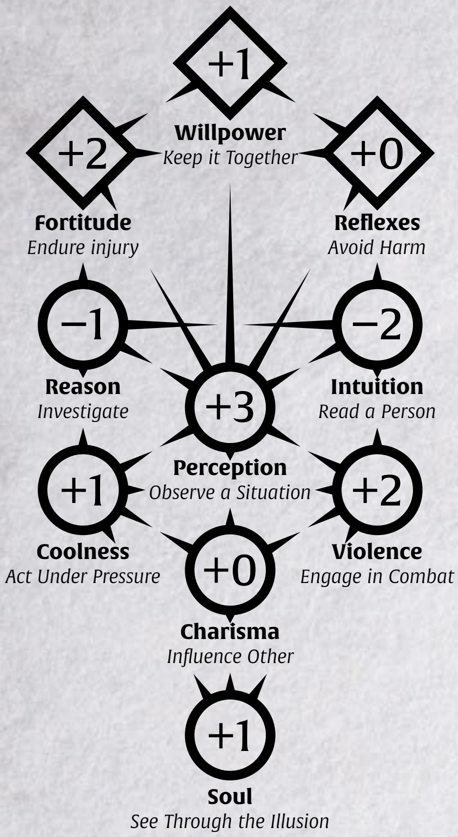
Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

■	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

THE PHOTOGRAPHER – LAURENT

Attributes


+1
Willpower
Keep it Together
+2
Fortitude
Endure injury
+0
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
−1
Reason
Investigate
−2
Intuition
Read a Person
+3
Perception
Observe a Situation
+1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+2
Violence
Engage in Combat
+0
Charisma
Influence Other
+1
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Appearance

Denim-wearing hunk. Bohemian clothes. Tired face. Passionate eyes. Graceful body.

Relations

LOVES Sandra Black.

WANTS TO DESTROY all priests.

TORN in his feeling towards the Bishop.

Dark Secret

Victim of Crime: As a young man Laurent was sexually abused by a priest.

Disadvantages

Victim of Passion: You are crazy about Sandra Black. She is just perfect.

Drug Addict: It used to be bad but now things are under control. For now.

Motivation

DISGRACE the Bishop. He is just as bad as all other priests. Or is he?

MAKE Sandra love you. There must be a way to win her heart.

IMPRESS Loretta the porn mogul.

Items

Expensive camera.

Wounds

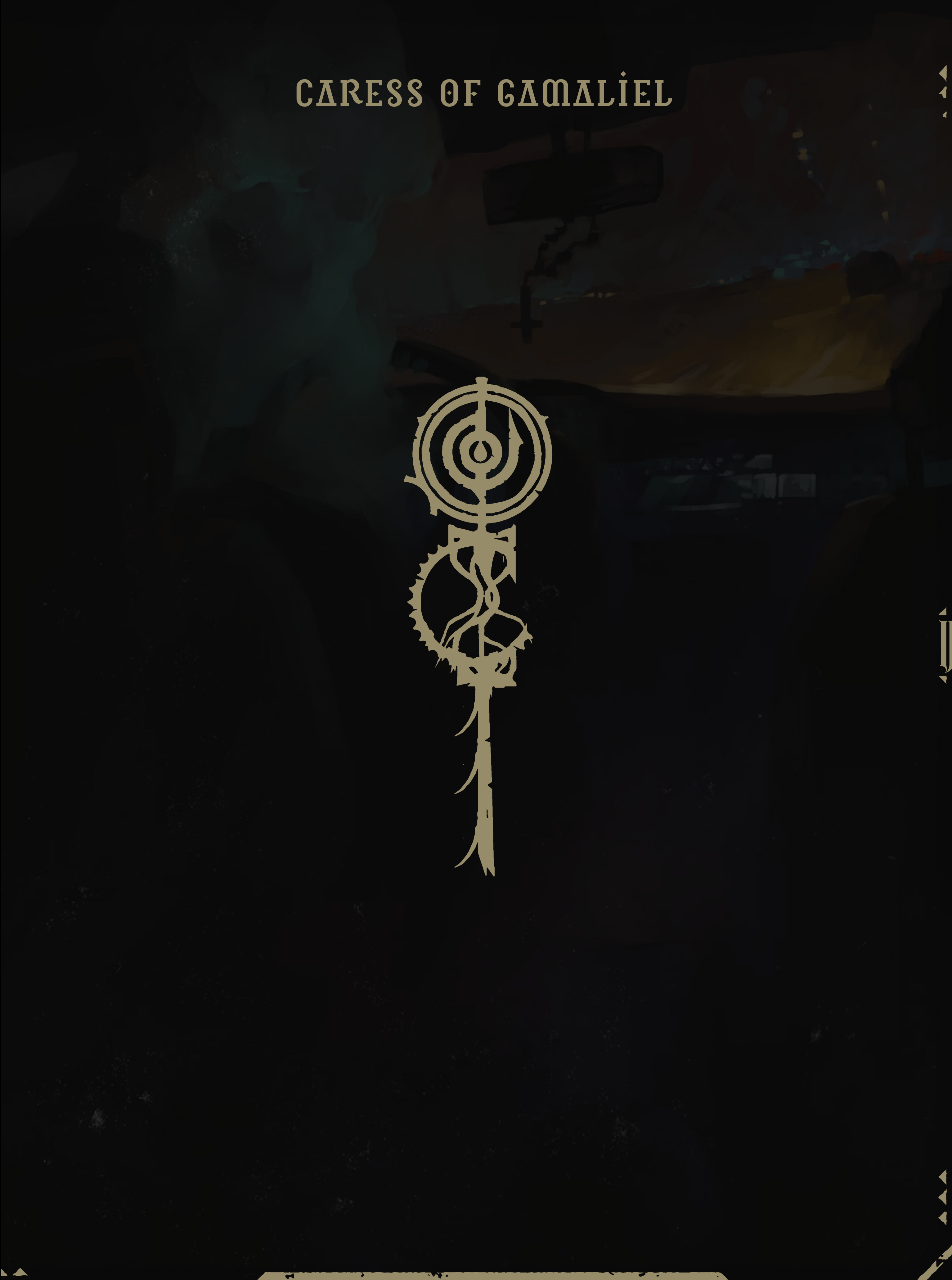
Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

■	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

CARESS OF GAMALIEL



DESERT WHISPERS

FOUR STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SPEND Spring Break in Ciudad Juárez.

They came looking for cheap thrills and great parties, but found something else instead.

What awaits them will change them forever.

If they survive the night.

The King of Slaughter

César Donaldo was baptized in violence by the Mexican cartels. They killed his father, trafficked his mother, and traded him to the owner of a cacao plantation in Colombia. There, overwhelmed by the tragedy of his life, broken by taskmasters, and on the brink of death, he heard the whispers and hymns of the Herald of Violence (see page 234 in the core book).

That night, death came to the cocoa plantation. The slaughter began and César was swept away in its dance. He murdered and disemboweled his bosses with his bare hands and a small pruning knife. He placed their steaming intestines on the ground before the Herald of Violence. In return, the god placed a barbed crown on his head proclaiming him King of Slaughter. The survivors were either killed by César's decree or forced to bend the knee and become Jackals in his service. He promised the Herald of Violence an offering of 200 souls. When those were paid in full, the crown would pass from his head. The Herald further promised to grant him the powers of Death Magic, and the ability to enter the realms of Inferno and Metropolis.

For years, César hunted and murdered his way across South and Central America. He then returned to Mexico, where he assembled a cult of followers which, along with his pack of Jackals, took up residence in an abandoned textile mill on the outskirts of Juarez. For a year, he and his cult have hosted wild parties at their base. Most of the time, they are just free parties for people to come and go. On certain nights, though, he invites his Jackal pack to slaughter the guests. Using glyphs and sigils carefully placed around the factory he traps the suffering souls of the Jackals victims in a borderland between worlds. To die at one of César's parties is to be an offering to the Herald of Violence. He's almost finished his offering of 200 souls. If he succeeds in one last mass offering, the Herald of Violence will take his crown and pass it to a new Monarch of Slaughter.

The Player Characters

The Player Characters are all students at The University of Texas. It's Spring Break and they are headed to Juarez, Mexico looking for a good time. There, they are lured to one of César's parties with free booze and drugs.

This scenario has been designed for four players, and four pre-generated characters are included at the end. These can be handed out to the players, or they can create their own. If you want to have more or fewer players, or create new characters, feel free to do so. They should all be the Sleeper archetype. Also, the four pre-generated characters have certain hooks and motivations that tie them to the scenario, so use these as inspiration if creating new characters.

Scenario theme

Survival and sacrifice: How much is too much? As the stakes get even higher, how much are you willing to sacrifice? The characters begin the scenario as college students with strong and perhaps somewhat simple convictions. If they survive, they find themselves deeply and permanently changed.

Tips for the Gamemaster

Short and Intense: This scenario is a modern slasher. It is meant to be played for a few intense hours. Here the focus is on blood, sweat, sensations and gore. Don't be afraid to kill the player characters in grotesque ways. Let the ones that die assume the role of one of the surviving partygoers and continue the carnage.

Sensations of Life and Death: Juarez is a city of contrasts. Describe the poverty versus the immense wealth, the huge factories, the oppressive heat in the daytime versus the freezing temperatures of night. Once the characters move into the desert, describe the chill and the cloudless sky where they can see thousands of stars. Describe the roadkill and the bleached bones in the sand. Once they move to the party, the press of bodies, the stink of sweat and alcohol, and the overall orgy of hedonism should be described in detail. Let the players get lost in the scene and let them know they can get anything they want there. Nothing is off limits. All the people seem willing, the booze and drugs are free, and the party is wild.

Violent Chaos: Once the killing starts in the darkness, prey upon the players' isolation. They are far from home in the middle of a desert with no way to get out. There are no parents or teachers here to advise or guide them. They are truly on their own. The Jackals attack randomly once the murder begins. Feel free to describe them bearing down on the characters, only to change direction and strike down another partygoer. This is an excellent opportunity to separate and even outright attack the player characters. Once the Herald of Violence appears, feel free to let all hell break loose as the Illusion shatters.

THE BEGINNING

It's been a pretty average semester at the University of Texas. Spring Break has come and you head across the border into Juarez looking for a good time. The heat is oppressive, but the beer is cold and cheap and the locals are friendly to their American visitors. You heard about a massive party out in the desert where everything is free. Yes, everything.

A man at the bar, Octavio, offers to drive you there. Clearly you are not the first group of tourists to ride with him. His rate, $10 per person, is nothing to argue about. His van is an old Chevy Econoline 3500 with busted seats and a flat tire taking up the back seat. Rust and dust covers the van, turning it from the once-white paint to a ruddy reddish color. The radio plays Tejano music as he drives out of the lit city and into the desert night.

Into the Desert

Soon, the lights fade into the distance and Juarez is just a glow on the horizon. After twenty minutes of travel, the van turns off the highway onto a small side road. It's rough travel, and he has to slow the van in many spots to dodge potholes or mountains of sand. He jokes about this being a bad place to mess up your van. It's a long walk to anywhere close for a mechanic, and cell phones don't work in the desert.

Octavio knows that the characters are going to be killed at the party. He's been ferrying victims around all night. He is a cultist and will show back up for the slaughter. If the characters give Octavio no trouble, he drives them out to the party.

There are old, faded bloodstains on the upholstery of the van. One of the side doors has a bullet hole in it, and one of the windows was recently replaced with a sheet of plywood. It is also very dark in the van, so these details are easy to miss.

Observant characters can occasionally see a pair of headlights behind them, or taillights in front of them, for a moment before they pass out of sight. If asked, Octavio will tell them they're headed to the party. Octavio knows that the lights are from a fellow cultist who is there to make sure nobody escapes on the trip.

If the players ask Octavio about getting back to Juarez, he assures them that they'll be back to the bar around dawn.

If the players try to escape the van, they find that the doors are locked. There is no obvious lock on the door; Octavio laughs and explains that the van door isn't working. He'll let them out when they get there.

If asked about the drugs, he says, "The man who owns the place has paid off the cartels so they supply his parties. It's harmless. They want his money and he's not hurting anybody." He tells the player characters to relax and opens one of his beer coolers. He drinks one and tells them to help themselves.

Soon, the only light is coming from the dashboard of the van and the headlights. Overhead an ocean of stars fills the night sky, more than the player characters have ever seen.

Personal Scenes In The Van

Here are some prompts for scenes during the trip.

- There is a bump in the road and Buck spills beer over Daisy.
- Annabelle gets a creepy compliment from Octavio.
- Raul scrolls to an Instagram post with a picture of Peter, earlier in the day. He stands with a beer in his hand on a street in Juarez. The caption reads: "Next, party in the desert!".
- Daisy's mother, Cassandra, is calling. Daisy and Cassandra can barely hear each other over the poor reception and the sounds of the van.
- One by one, player characters lose cell reception.
- One of the characters hears a strange whisper in the desert wind.

Whispers in the Wind

For a moment, the desert winds seem to whisper to you. That's not possible. Even if they were whispering, you have no idea what they're saying.

If a player character is outside in the desert night, or in the factory but next to a door or opening, one of these whispers may reach their ears. This touches upon each character's Resentments and Fears, and pulls on that very deep part of them. There is another voice in the night winds: a warm female voice that is smoky and soaked in blood. This is the voice of the Herald of Violence approaching the Factory.

If the character asks about the whispers, their hosts explain that it is the sound of the wind passing through some nearby cliffs and ruins. It's a strange phenomenon, but a totally normal one.

Below are some whispers tailored to each of the player characters. Feel free to sprinkle them throughout the scenario.

ANABELLE DAWSON

The voices often have a southern accent and they are vibrating with anger and frustration.

- *"You privileged bitch."*
- *"We know where you live, Anabelle."*
- *"You think you're better than us? You're just a dumb piece of ass!"*

The Voice of the Herald of Violence

- *"Be my Queen and cleanse the world of their ignorant kind."*

RAUL MENENDEZ

The voices are strict and preaching.

- *"God sees what you are doing, Raul."*
- *"What would your parents say if they knew?"*
- *"Peter doesn't love you; he never has. You're just an easy fuck for him."*

The Voice of the Herald of Violence

- *"Be my King, rule as you wish, be with whomever you wish. Give me the heads of the priests and their ignorant flock."*

DAISY PETERSON

The voices are calm, cool, and sound impressive.

- *"What are you up to, silly girl?"*
- *"We are keeping our eyes on you. We know where you are at all times."*
- *"You ain't no rebel. Run back to momma."*

The Voice of the Herald of Violence

- *"Become my Queen and awaken the ignorant minds. Make them fear! Make them realize they are alive."*

BUCK JONES

All the voices are female.

- *It sounds like a group of women laughing at you.*
- *"You're pathetic. Get out of here, limp dick."*
- *"Your time is up, Buck."*

The Voice of the Herald of Violence

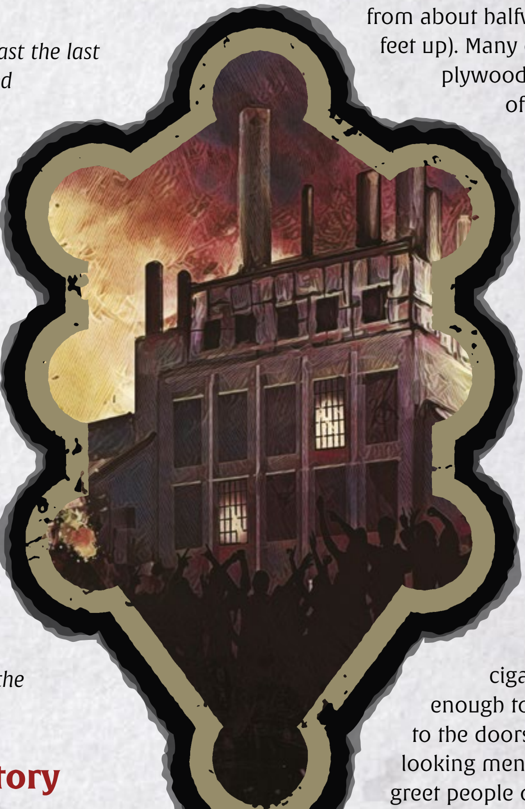
- *"Join me. Be a King. Have anyone you want and punish the rest. They will fear and respect you."*

THE FACTORY

Collapsed and vacant husks of buildings appear in the yellow headlights of the van. It pulls onto an old dirt road. The van slews sideways briefly before the spinning tires catch the ground underneath and lurch the van forwards. The buildings glimpsed in the headlights file slowly past as Octavio navigates the shifting ground. Some are collapsed with only the outer walls remaining. The ones still standing stare emptily at the van as it passes, windows broken or missing and doors hanging by a single hinge. The road is choked with piles of new gravel and old desert grit.

A large fence emerges on the right just past the last building. Its chain-link perimeter is topped with rusted barbed wire. Sections of the fence are missing or rolling up from a corner. You can see many vehicles parked just behind it. A gate is open, and beyond it you can see a hulking shell of a factory. Light gushes out from the open door and shines in a multitude of colors from the skylights and upper windows.

Octavio drives you past the gate, and you see rows of cars pulled up to the fence. For the most part they are covered in dust or dirt and some of them look abandoned. A sign reads "Mujeres Textiles". The van pulls up to the large double freight door. You can hear the loud music from here. The light within spills out in a cone over the sand. Beyond that, the cars and gate are nothing but silhouettes in the darkness.



Outside the Factory

The former textile factory lies just beyond an open freight door, and light fills the parking lot in front of it. The factory itself is a relic from the 1960s. Most of the windows are barred over, hiding broken panes and sheets of plywood. The exterior of the factory is a dingy gray with the tin roof rusty red at the edges where the light hits them. The rust runoff from the infrequent rains has spilled down the building and coated the corners and sides with a red patina. A dumpster sits off to the side of the old factory. The incinerator is almost always running. The smokestack from the furnace is putting out black smoke. Vehicles and people surrounding the building for more than a half hour acquire a light coating of ash.

If the characters wander out in the desert night and look around, they find that the dumpster is full of discarded clothing, personal effects, and alcohol bottles. They might also find bloodstained clothing and personal effects beneath the sand.

Inside the Factory

The factory is a huge, echoing tomb of rusted machinery and cracked concrete. It has been abandoned for years. The music from the dance floor echo s hauntingly, distorting the further you walk inside. It is like a giant, pitch black, cave. Here and there, next to the bathrooms, the entrance, or placed on some rusted machinery you'll find outdoor garden candles that offer some light. Other than that, the only lights come from the dance floor and the upstairs office.

The walls are of concrete, many are stained and spattered. Here and there are graffiti and primitive art. It can be hard to tell in the gloom, but it seems as if someone has painted strange symbols of some sort along the walls. These are the magical glyphs that César uses to trap souls in the borderlands of the factory.

The windows are tall and run to the ceiling from about halfway up the wall (10 to 80 feet up). Many of them are covered with plywood screwed into the walls of the building. Those that remain have bars welded across them. They appear to open inward on rusty hinges. Many of the plywood-covered windows are stained with dark splatters.

The building has multiple skylights. Unlike the rest of the factory, these have been replaced with stained glass. On a sunny day, they probably look brilliant with the sunlight shining through them.

1. Entrance Hall

An open concrete floor covered in desert sand, crushed cans, cigarette butts, and poppers. It is big enough to park trucks. A mercury bulb next to the doors gives some extra light. Four tough looking men standing, or sitting, near the doors, greet people on their way in. Some guests go out to get some cool, desert air, or to have a smoke and talk. From the right of the entrance hall is the dance floor with its loud music and stroboscope lights. You can also see the lit upstairs office, and further in the rest of the factory that gets swallowed up by darkness.

2. The Dance Floor

This area is packed with sweaty bodies in various states of alteration and intoxication. In corners, groups of people fondle and paw at each other, either in groups or as pairs. It's a large area that dominates the floor of the factory. Against the far wall is a DJ playing top 40 hits from the United States. To the left there are tables set up with any possible alcohol or drug the player characters could want. In the corners of the dance floor, you will find beanbags, old sofas and ripped out car seats to sit on.

3. The Footing

This is a semi-treacherous area as industrial machinery used to reside here. There are divots in the concrete, cut bolts sticking up, a large floor drain with the floor slanted towards it, and places where conveyors and machinery used to be welded onto metal sheets. Occasionally, someone will stumble. Sometimes they get back up, sometimes they just lay there. Observant characters can see old bloodstains, bullet holes in concrete posts, desiccated bones on the floor, or the occasional tuft of hair with the scalp still attached.

4. The Upstairs Office

There is a rickety metal staircase leading to an upstairs office. It is flanked by a pair of tough looking guards. The guards are regular cultists, and player characters will have to kill, incapacitate, or trick the guards to get into the office. They will not hesitate to shoot anyone who attempts to break in, who harasses them, or who simply looks at them funny. They will pull pistols and tell the individual to go enjoy the party. The office is where César and the cultists hang out. It's full of overstuffed sofas, and priceless heirloom furniture smashed to bits. On one wall a rough painting portrays a woman wearing a barbed wire crown. She's covered in blood and surrounded by swirling desert winds. This is the Herald of Violence. Anyone studying the painting for a longer period of time will hear wind and whispers emanating from the painting. In a large, locked footlocker sit the ceremonial chains with hooks that will be used by the cultists during the ritual. When the ritual is about to start these are passed out and the cultists put their phones, IDs and other personal equipment here. Through the blinds, one can look out over the footing below.

5. Bathrooms

One section of the factory has a series of curtains hanging from it with a hand-painted sign nailed to a wooden plank: el baño. The curtains aren't quite long enough and the player characters can see that the toilets are just drains where the factory used to drain off the treatment chemicals. Some of the drain covers are missing. The place reeks of shit and blood.

6. The Doors

The doors are sliding metal freight doors. The opening is 30 feet high. The doors themselves are on surprisingly well-maintained sliders. There are two of them, measuring 30 feet tall by 20 feet wide. The opening is 40 feet wide in total. Brackets and hooks have been welded to the inside of the door and they look as though they could be secured from the inside with chains, a bar, or possible metal rods that extend into the floor. At some point in the past, somebody peppered the steel doors with bullets.

7. The Barriers

The rest of the factory has been boarded off with makeshift piles of old equipment, plywood walls, or welded steel sections.

8. Beyond the Barriers

If the players manage to get beyond the barriers and into the rest of the factory, they emerge into a dark labyrinth of rusted machinery, small rooms, and storage containers. There are no lights. The only light streams through cracks and holes in the barrier. Player characters may discover a rear door of the factory, which is chained and barred shut, and doors that lead to room 9 and 10. If the players explore this area they may stumble upon:

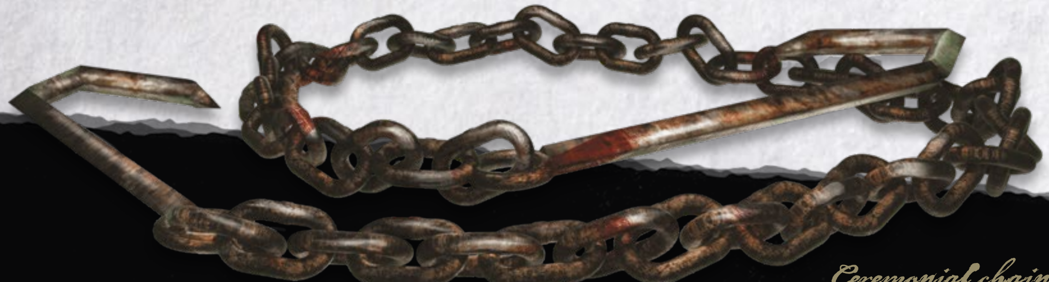
- A small altar surrounded by candles, and on it an icon portraying the Herald of Violence.
- A couple, high on drugs, having clumsy and awkward sex in a corner.
- A cultist filled with doubt is hiding here and is having a panic attack, knowing what is coming.
- A gust of wind and a stench of death from the bodies at the crematorium.
- A grate that, if a player character manages to pull it open, they can enter tunnels beneath the factory that leads out into the desert.
- A starved and curled up previous party goer that is hiding behind some old machinery. They are in shock and can't speak, but it is clear that they are dehydrated and in a bad state.
- A rusted chain with hooks in both ends.

9. Crematorium

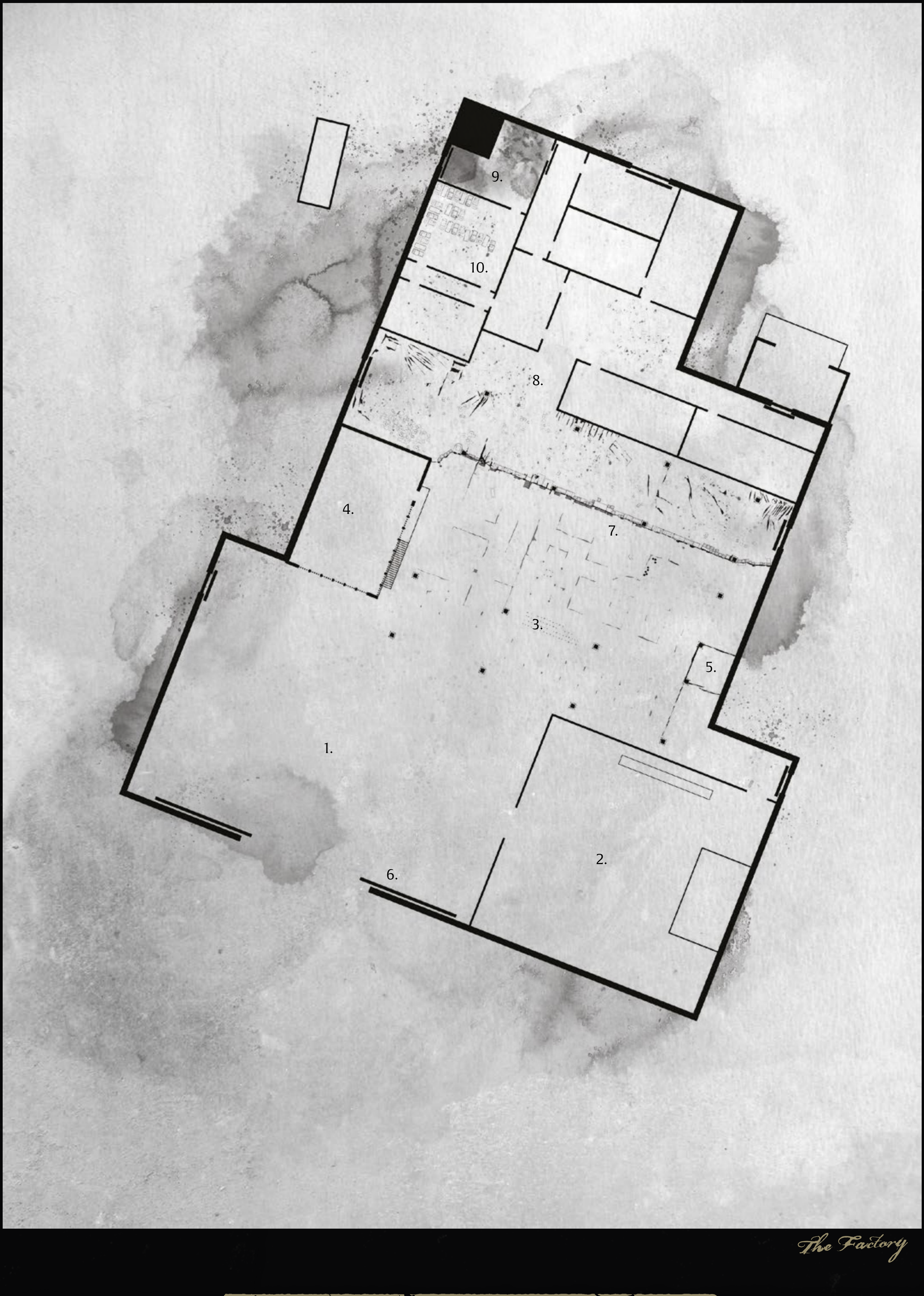
This used to be the factory's incinerator. Stacked in this cavernous room are bodies. Twenty-five corpses are piled around the room, while the furnace burns merrily away behind a large door. If the characters pull open the large metal door, they see ashes, half-burned corpses, and blackened bones behind the shimmering heat. It's hard to look in for more than a moment before being overwhelmed by the heat.

10. Barracks

There is living space for twenty people in this room. The beds are arranged wall to wall with a footlocker at each footboard. The beds are military surplus cots with metal spring frames. Within the lockers are various personal effects, weapons, and valuables stripped from victims.



Ceremonial chain with hooks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THE PARTY

You exit the van and are immediately hit with a wave of music. You can feel the bass in your stomach and you see a large group of people dancing wildly within. The van pulls away, leaving you in front of the double doors. A few men are hanging around the entrance. They are wearing dark, long-sleeved shirts and long pants against the chill of the desert night. One of them smiles at you and waves you in.

When the players enter:

It is noticeably warmer within the factory than outside in the night air. To your right you see a packed dance floor. Bodies gyrate and people yell or laugh, the sounds absorbed in the punching bass. Beyond the bodies you can see the DJ, naked to the waist and sweating. A man in shorts and a collared shirt is arguing with him about something, but the DJ just closes his eyes and puts his hands on his headphones.

A woman looks up from the table, green dress unbuttoned in the front revealing elaborate lace underneath. Her nose and mouth are dusted in cocaine. She steps back and rubs a hand across her face. Her place is taken by a man in a suit. You see people walking around with bottles of alcohol in their hands. Others drink from Solo cups.

There is an area beyond the dance floor that is blocked off with a shower curtain. As you look, a woman comes out buttoning her pants. She wipes her hands on the thighs of her jeans and walks off to one of the dark corners, alone. In other corners and any semi-secluded space are pairs, threesomes, and other groups of people writhing in various states of undress. Their moans of ecstasy and desire are lost in the beat.

Amid all the chaos rises a rickety metal stairway to a second story office. Two more men flank the lower landing in dark shirts and jeans. The door to the upper office is closed, but there is a light on inside, and occasionally a shadow moves across the window.

When the characters enter the factory, they enter a cacophony of sounds and lights where people of all stripes party wildly. The DJ is pumping out hit after hit and there is an endless supply of alcohol and drugs. Partiers pass joints freely and beers cool in buckets of ice. Those that are not dancing try to talk over the music, get laid in corners, or relax on beanbags.

The Partygoers

The characters now have a chance to get their party on. Here's a list of some of the people they might meet. Feel free to improvise others that have a wild night.

- **Peter Paulson:** Raul's ex who wound up at the same party. Peter is charismatic, bisexual, and extremely extroverted. He's also easily bored and is always seeking a new thrill. He always hugs, he always smiles, and he always has a joint or a drink ready. He cares about Raul, maybe even loves him, but Raul wanted more than he was willing to commit. He may hit on other player characters.
- **Jack Bilton:** Vacationer from Juarez. Wearing a Hawaiian shirt, shorts, sandals, and complaining drunkenly about losing his hat. Can't dance very well.
- **Renee Cortman:** Renee is on a cocaine-fueled high the likes of which she's never been on before. She's high, she's horny, and she talks through her nose.
- **Todd Summer:** This guy thinks he's arguing with the DJ about house music, but is actually talking nonsense. He's in the middle of an acid trip and having a wonderful time.
- **Denise Topman:** Denise can either be found in one of the corners or out on the dance floor getting down. She's a stockbroker from Houston and this is a chance for her to completely cut loose with no coworkers finding out.
- **Phil Allen:** Phil is a real-estate speculator who has dealings with one of the cartels. He uses lots of illegal labor and was invited down for the weekend to work out the latest trafficking deal. He's enjoying the booze and will size up any of the characters to sell off later. The only hitch is he doesn't know what's coming.
- **Greg Blake:** Greg is on a construction crew working in Juarez. His friends warned him not to come, but there's too much good stuff going on for him to worry about that right now. He gets really excited if the characters meet him and complains about illegal aliens, how Mexicans need to learn English, and picks on Raul. That doesn't stop him from making sexist comments about the Mexicans at the party.
- **Dominica:** She will only give her first name. She's a nurse from the city and she's a little concerned about the party (especially with the epidemic of missing women in Ciudad Juárez) but the bowl of Xanax on one of the tables has taken most of her cares away. She's barely coherent in either Spanish or English, whereas she's normally quite fluent. She'll try to seduce Buck, then fall asleep on him
- **Fabián Agresto:** Fabián is from one of the cartels. He and his crew brought the drugs for tonight. César asked for some expendables, and Fabián was immediately picked. He'd lost a million-dollar shipment crossing the border and was recently deported. He figures the score for this shipment is his way of making it up to his cartel captain. Instead, he's been sent here to be removed. He's high on just about everything he can get his hands on, but he's such a heavy user that his head's only slightly twisted by the altering substances. He really likes Anabelle.
- **Ricardo de León:** Well-built, heavily tattooed, and dances bare chested. Has a lot of machismo but would rather run than fight.

- **Teresa Ávila:** Loud, cute, bilingual, and bisexual. She will attempt to get Buck or Daisy to have sex with her. Both would be a dream come true. She takes them past the barrier into the back of the factory through a gap she found.
- **Alicia Domínguez:** Silent in a corner. Came with her friend Teresa but wants to go home. Has a bad feeling about the whole situation. She heard strange voices in the wind outside the factory.
- **Daniel López:** A bit too drunk, must have swallowed something. Has strange hallucinations about a slaughter. Blades in the dark. Blood. So much Blood. He curls up on a beanbag and weeps.
- **Tito Guerrera:** A cult member hidden among the crowd. He hides his crown tattoo on the wrist behind an expensive watch. If any of the characters separate and start poking around, he'll bring them a drink and start chatting them up, trying to lure them back to the party. If he finds out they are college students, he'll act surprised and tell them about how he had three years at the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez studying pre-law, but had to drop out to help his father on their ranch. Tito is actually quite nervous. This is the first time he's supposed to take part in the ritual slaughter and if he starts caring about a character, he might try to warn them. Tito does not have the cultist ability *Fanatical*.

The Cultists

Below is a description of three of the cultists that the players might interact with.

Manuel Delgado

This is the cultist who waves at the characters and greets them. He stands 6 feet tall and is dressed in a long-sleeve navy blue shirt and dark jeans that strain at the seams. There is a large hunting knife tucked into his waistband and hidden by his shirt. Manuel has dark brown skin, almost black hair, and large black eyes. A thin mustache stretches across his fleshy face. He has the crown tattoo that all of the cultists bear on their left wrist. He is bilingual, like most of Ciudad Juárez, but mostly offers the player characters drinks and drugs. Anyone willing to take him up on his offer is guided over to the tables of alcohol and drugs. He will pat Buck (or the other largest male player character) on the shoulder and task Marco with keeping an eye on him.

Marco Delgado

Marco is 6 ½ feet tall and well built. He is wearing the same shirt and jeans as the rest of the cultists. His face is thin, angular, and clean shaven. Along with the cultist crown tattoo, he has three teardrops on his face and some ink on his neck indicating a full torso tattoo. He is the enforcer on the floor. At his belt is a taser that he will use on anyone who becomes violent. He is also Manuel's brother.

TASER: Shock [–], [Distance: arm, player character rolls +**Fortitude**: (**15+**) Still capable of acting; (**10–14**) Dazed: −2 *ongoing* during this scene; (**−9**) The victim is subdued for this scene].

Rinaldo Gil

Rinaldo is César's apprentice. On top of the standard cultist abilities, he has [Magic 1 - Mortal Stare]. If the GM spends a hold or as a consequence of a failed roll, Rinaldo can give a player a glimpse of their own death. This causes the player to lose **-2 Stability**. Rinaldo is dressed in a black suit. He's a slim 6 feet tall. His black hair is shaved on the sides with a long fade combed over his left side. His eyes are a piercing green and stand out from his lighter skin.

Before the Massacre

The party is in full swing inside. Some people step out to cool off, or smoke a joint and look up at the stars. Later, the wind intensifies and the doors are pulled close so there is only a small opening. If any of the characters try to exit the party, they are stopped by the men at the door. In English, they explain that it's not safe in the desert, and that their escort will be back to get them in the morning.

Quick Cuts

As the party builds up, give it energy and rhythm. Have the right music in the background and don't let any scene drag on for two long. Think of the party as a montage. Start scenes in the middle of something, then cut to a decision the player character needs to make. The party should be a haze that goes almost too fast for the player characters to keep up. Some example scenes:

- *Someone gets too drunk or too high and the world spins.*
- *Making out with a girl on the dance floor. Or was it a guy?*
- *Dancing and singing along to the music with a group of strangers.*
- *Drunkenly telling another PC that they're your best friend in the world.*
- *Is that an old bloodstain on the floor and walls?*
- *Discover a long chain with a cruel hook at the other end.*
- *Overhear one of the men guarding the party saying, "Almost time, they should be here soon."*
- *Take care of someone who is throwing up/passing out.*
- *Hear a strange noise while making out with one of the other party guests.*
- *Is someone watching you?*

King César Enters

At some point during the party, César descends from the office with two cultists. He makes the rounds through the party, making sure to greet each partygoer personally. He is charming and finds a way to compliment everyone, player characters included. He sends one of his cultists to get whatever his target might want.

- For a moment César seems to be wearing an iron crown on his head. His face is drenched in his own blood, which runs onto his suit. The next second, the vision is gone.
- One of the cultists seems to be bursting with excitement. They paw at the King's immaculate suit, almost whining, "How long, I feel that she is close!". César just calms them by saying "Soon, soon."
- He starts a conversation about spoiled Millennials and how they turn the world to shit. If he is challenged or argued with, he just smiles and says, "They have never been through hardship. It will be interesting to see how they would manage it."

Preparing the Rite

Four cultists carry out an altar from the area beyond the barriers and place it on the footing. The altar is made of pallets and pieces of wood, and is covered by a red cloth. Upon the altar they have the icon depicting the Herald of Violence: a woman with long hair and a barbed crown. This happens in the middle of the party and most people do not even give it a second thought. If asked what they are doing, they say that they are preparing something special. They won't say anything more about it.

The Arrival of the Jackals

During the night, the desert wind gets even worse. It seems to hammer at the corrugated steel and the covered windows. With the storm comes the Jackals. They have been waiting in the wilderness, praying over their tools of death. Called by the will of their King, they march through the dust storm. When they enter the main doors, they stand silently among the partygoers as the cultists close, bar, and padlock the doors.

The Jackals look barely human. There's more scar tissue than flesh on their bodies, and their postures are more akin to those of bears or vultures than people. In their hands are knives, machetes, baseball bats, hammers and other cruel tools. Some of the partygoers notice them and react, but most are too drunk, too high, or too lost in music and revelry.

The cultists all undress. They smear their bodies with a strongly smelling balm (this prevents the Jackals from attacking them) and spread out among the partygoers. They radiate an intense focus, do not answer questions, and mutter strange prayers. The music continues pounding, but the cultists and Jackals are stock still. They hold their implements of destruction in their hands, waiting for the signal. It is the time for slaughter.

THE SLAUGHTER

The Jackals begin killing and dismembering people while a house remix of Barbie Girl by Aqua blares over the speakers. The lights on the dance floor spasm rhythmically to the beat bathing the room in flashes of colored light broken by moments of utter dark. The Jackals appear out of the dark brandishing machetes, hammers, and knives. Several guests are so drunk so it takes a long time for them to react. Soon the air is filled with screams. Panic ensues. The floor is soon wet with blood, making running hazardous. The players witness several of the people they met at the party die in front of them.

Though everything seems chaotic, there is a dark order to the slaughter. The Jackals are the Sacrificers and tools of King César. They are the ones that must do the killing so the souls may be feasted on by the Herald of Violence.

The cultists are the Gatherers. Naked and with chains with sharp hooks in their end they trap, chain, and drag victims so that the Jackals may attack them. They drag the bodies of the killed or wounded to the altar. They may also hunt those that try to escape and return them to the main hall.

This scene should be brutal, terrifying, and vicious. The player characters don't know how many enemies there are. The loud volume, the lights, and the substances add to the confusion. Ask the players what their characters do and throw danger at them time and time again. Use moves to separate them and drive them away from each other. Some suggestions:

- *Person in front of you is beheaded and blood and guts spray all over your face.* ***Avoid Harm*** *not to slip in the blood.*
- *[Person the character had a good time with at the party] is on their knees on the floor. Their stomach is cut open with a knife and an attacker drags out their intestines with a squelching sound. The victim meets your eyes.* ***Keep it Together****.*

- *One of the attackers moves up behind [person the character had a good time with] and raises a big hammer. What do you do?*
- *You lose the grip of whatever you're holding.*
- *[Person the character became attached to] grabs your hand and says, "I know a way out of here" and pulls you along.*
- *A hook is rammed into the thigh of [person a character was interested in]. They scream in pain and try to crawl away, but they are trapped by a naked man with a wild stare.*
- *People are running around in panic. You see an opening, a way to escape into the deeper parts of the factory. You have a chance to slip away but you have to go now. Do you take it?*
- *Attackers hold another partier down and smashes their knees with a hammer.*

Fighting the Enemy

The characters can fight the Jackals and cultists, but the sense of chaos should force them to flee from the immediate carnage. There are just too many assailants. Separate the players in the chaos and attack them. If a player character tries to fight the cultists and Jackals as a group, they will likely die. If a player character is knocked out, the cultists chain them to a pillar together with a couple others to be sacrificed at the end of the ritual. The chains are rusted and old, so there might be a way to break free - or be set free by another character.

Trying to Escape

The doors and windows are barred, but it is possible to flee into the sealed off areas of the factory. Some of the Jackals or cultists will be sure to follow and try to drag the players back into the ritual chamber. This will be a truly nightmarish experience.

If a player finds a way out of the factory, they enter a raging sandstorm. There is a shanty town nearby, and then miles and miles of desert. Out here, in the night, the whispers become violent screams. Below are some scenes a player character might encounter while fleeing into the desert.

- *Through the wind a naked cultist comes running, a chain with a hook in its hands. He attacks!*
- *All visibility is lost; everything is just sand and darkness.* ***Keep it Together****. On a failed roll the character is back at the factory.*
- *The player character encounters another character that has escaped. This person is wounded and is bleeding out.*

King César

The King of Slaughter does not partake in the brutality. Instead, he stands on top of the stairs and just observes. He smokes a cigar he has saved for many years. This is his night. This is his final sacrifice. If the players actually are winning against the cultists and Jackals, he steps down on the floor to make sure that the sacrifice can be performed.

If A Player Character Dies or Escapes

If a player character dies very early on or escapes into the desert, let the player assume the role of one of the other partygoers. Let the player place the standard set of Attributes but no Advantages or Disadvantages. Feel free to start each of these characters with **-5 Stability** and perhaps even a **Serious Wound**. If you know you will go hard at the players, feel free to prepare some more pre-written characters you can hand out when needed.

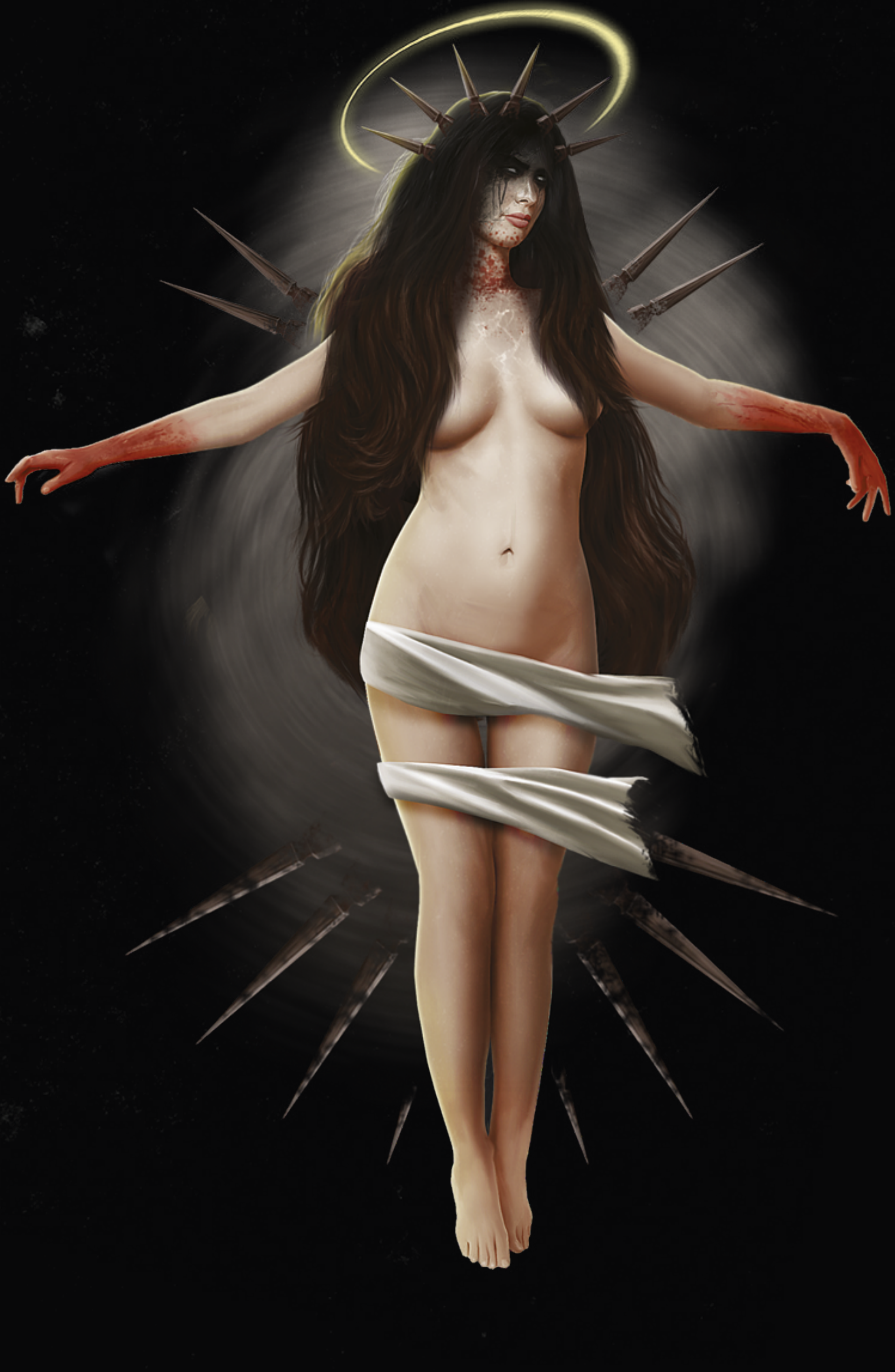
The Ritual

Lights flicker on and off in the blood-washed factory. A circle of naked cultists, holding hooks and chains, move slowly in a counterclockwise circle around the altar. Their skin is wet with blood or sweat as they chant slowly. Your skin prickles as the temperature in the factory plummets. Your breath fogs before your sweat turns to icy rivulets, threatening to freeze on your skin. Screams echo inside your head as the cacophony of pain reaches a crescendo. The unmistakable taste of iron and the scent of fresh blood overpowers your nose and mouth. Above the altar, the air begins to shimmer and a mist gathered from exhaled breath begins to coalesce.

While trapping people for the slaughter, the cultists chant a strange hymn and slowly circle the altar. The cultists' goal is not just to kill. The goal is to create as much fear, panic and pain as possible. It is all part of a macabre ritual to break down the Illusion.

The factory seems to change. There is a shift in temperature and the screams become louder. Your nostrils are filled with the smell of blood which becomes a nauseating stench. In the slaughterhouse, you can see a ghostly outline of a creature, blurred and indistinct, coalescing in the air above the pile of dismembered bodies. There is a red line coming from each cultist leading to the shape. An undulating stream of visible text in an unknown language feeds into the ghostly form from the mouths of the cultists.

This should be a hellish scene. The lights are off except for the pulsing lights of the dance floor. People lay bleeding in every corner of the room. For anyone with enough light to see by, the walls drip blood. The player characters' ears are buffeted by the screams of the dead and dying, the chants of the cultists, and the growls of the Jackals.



The Herald of Violence

The Herald of Violence Appears

If the cult makes the final offerings and completes the ritual, the Herald of Violence appears. The whispers in the desert winds become a cacophony. Outside the winds turn to a storm surrounding the factory and a husky, bloody voice echoes between the walls. The Herald of Violence appears above the altar, presenting as a beautiful woman with flowing red-brown hair. She is magnificent and horrible.

The Jackals will offer their throats and she will sweep down and tear them out, killing them one by one. César will be the last one. She removes the dark crown from his head and whispers, *"Well done, my good and faithful servant."* He will then try to kill himself any way possible: blowing his brains out, cutting his throat, or bashing his head on one of the cement pillars. He will not die, however. With a smile on his ruined face, his eyes now shine with new insight and clarity. He starts to float upwards, laughing, as he is filled with new life. The ceiling windows shatter and he disappears into the stormy night.

The remaining cultists weep in the loss of the man that was their leader and King. They gather their clothes and walk out into the night. All the victims are left where they are, with bodies as heavy as lead, in the presence of this deity. To stand up, to walk, is almost impossible as long as the God has her gaze on the survivors.

The Herald of Violence now holds the crown in her hands. It has been fed 200 souls by César and now wishes a different taste. It is time that the violence spills out onto different people. The Elysian God is therefore seeking another Monarch to serve it.

The Herald of Violence focuses on the player characters. It can sense what they resent and fear and now offer an opportunity to strike out at these people. Only one can wear the crown, however, and it will offer the crown to the character that has impressed it the most. Its voice comes from the winds that dance around the chamber. "Will you be my servant; will you offer me 200 souls to reign over life and death?" The deity will offer something that the player character might want: killing a person they hate, granting the power that lies beyond death, keys to other worlds, transforming their body and mind, etc.

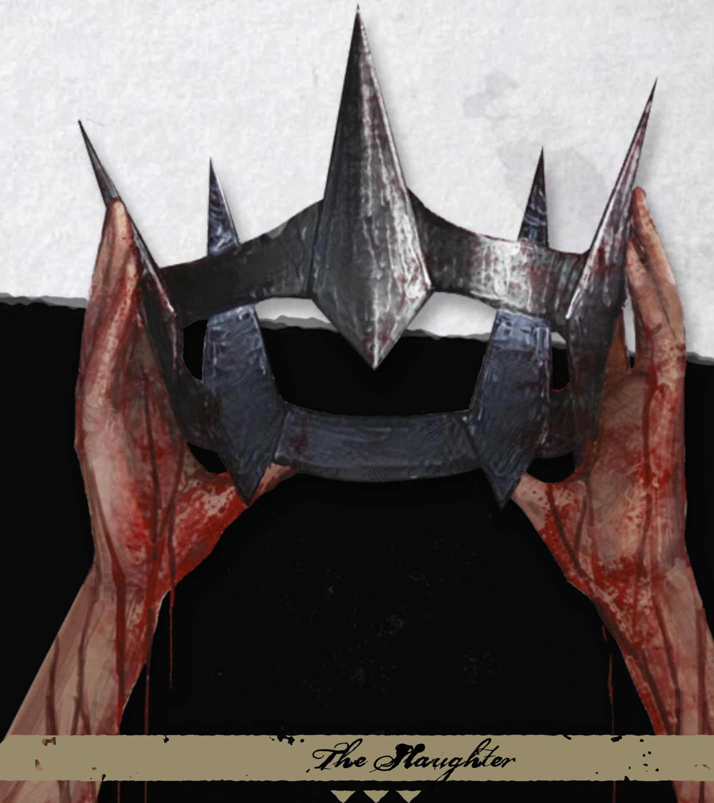
The Herald of Violence will let people bid over each other, but if everyone refuses, it will go to one of the non-player characters and offer them the crown. That person will ascend to be the new Monarch of Slaughter.

The survivors that were not offered the crown have the choice to bend the knee and submit to the new majesty. If they do so, their personality will be scraped away like wet paint and they will be filled with pure fanaticism. They will be turned into Jackals filled with the purity of the Monarch's convictions. Their lives will be simple, slaughtering those who the Monarch targets and doing so in ecstasy.

Those that do not bend the knee are at the mercy of the new Monarch. Perhaps they will be slaughtered to cement the coronation, or be allowed to live on and spread the word of the Herald of Violence.

The End

If the players have escaped or defeated the cultists, the Jackals, and César, the Herald of Violence disappears into the night. Otherwise, there is a new Monarch of Slaughter that will spread violence to those that deserve it. Regardless of how it ends, the storm subsides and the sun rises on a new day. Players should feel free to narrate their characters' epilogues here. How do they get back to civilization? How do the things they see change them?



NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The exact number of cultists and Jackals are left to the GM to decide. It's almost impossible for the player characters to get a head count on them anyway.

Cultists

These violent men all serve César devotedly. All of them were broken and out of luck but found a new home with César and almost see him as a father figure. Most of them are young, between 18-30 years old, and enjoy following him. They have been seduced by the sensation of violence. They love to smell the blood, hear the screams, and watch the Jackals do the slaughter. When the Herald of Violence appears in all her glory, it is the utmost satisfaction for them. This is sex, death, and devotion all combined. They have marked themselves with a tattoo of a stately crown on their left wrists.

Abilities

- *Euphoria of violence*: When the slaughter start, they cannot be reasoned with.

Combat [2], **Influence** [1], **Magic** [-].

Combat [Novice]

- Surround a target.
- Block way of escape.

Influence [Weak]

- Call for a Jackal.

Attacks

Before the slaughter, they will guard or hang out in César's office. They have handguns and knives. When the slaughter starts, they only fight with their ceremonial books and chains. Now they act as herders. They block escape routes and ram the brutal hooks into the partygoers so that a Jackal may finish them off, or they pull them to the altar, where they will be sacrificed. They may stop and howl and laugh in ecstasy when a Jackal finishes off a victim in a truly gruesome way.

Hook with Chain: **Hook** [1] [Distance: arm, ***Act Under Pressure*** to get lose]; **Rip out hook** [2] [Target must be Hooked]; **Pull away target** [1] [Pulls or drags the target somewhere, target must be Hooked]; **Fetter** [-]; [***Avoid Harm*** to resist to be Subdued, Target must be Hooked].

Knife: **Stab** [2] [Distance: arm].

Handgun: **Aimed shots** [2] [Distance: room].

Wounds & Harm Moves

Wounds: ○○○ ☠

- Laughs in ecstasy.
- Fills with rage [**+1 Harm** on following attacks].
- Knocked out.
- Dead.

Jackals

The Jackals are distorted and feral humans. They live in the wild, awaiting their master's call. They are wild, untamed with long hair, beards, broken teeth and scarred skin. Their clothes ripped and tattered and covered in sand and dust as if they had been buried in the desert sand. In their hands are knives, machetes, baseball bats, hammers and other cruel tools. They are cannibalistic and can use a superior sense of smell to track their victims. See the ***KULT: Divinity Lost*** (*p. 251*), for more information about the Jackals. These Jackals are totally submitted to the will of César. The victims they kill are added to the souls he is collecting to The Herald of Violence.

Abilities

- *Fanatical*: The Jackals cannot be reasoned with.

Combat [3], **Influence** [0], **Magic** [1].

Combat [Powerful]

- Gang up on an opponent (*-1 to all rolls against Jackals*).
- Track with scent.
- Bestial howls.

Magic [Novice]

- Instinctively follow the will of their master.

Attacks:

The Jackals fight with great brutality. They beat their victims to the ground, cut off limbs, break bones, and tear loose chunks of flesh with their teeth. The Jackals can track victims by their smell, and César might send a Jackal and some cultists to hunt down those that have fled. They are armed with various tools of violence.

Unarmed: **Pummel** [1] [Distance: Arm], **Hold down** [-]; [***Act Under Pressure*** to escape]; **Bite** [Victim must be held down or be constrained. **Serious Wound**].

Knife, Shiv, Hammer, Heavy chain: **Brutal violence** [2] [Distance: Arm]; **Hamstring** [0] [Distance: Arm, Target can no longer run].

Rope, Cable or Barbed wire: **Ensnare** [1] [Distance: Arm. Target must ***Act Under Pressure*** or become constricted].

Sledgehammer, Bat or Heavy wrench: **Beat down** [3] [Distance: Arm].

Bestial Howls: **Howl** [Distance: Room. Roll ***Keep it Together***].

Wounds & Harm Moves

Wounds: ○○○○ ☠

- Growls and bares teeth.
- Grabs hold of weapon.
- Stumbles onto the ground and struggles to get back up.
- A serious wound leaves the jackal disemboweled or amputated, yet it carries on its assault.
- Dies.

César Donaldo

The King of Slaughter is a man in his mid 40s with graying hair and a strong gaze. He carries himself as a natural leader and seems older than he actually is. The cultists that serve him are his family. They, like him, take pleasure in the violence they bless the world with. He has killed many, but his favorite victims are the young and privileged. He resents millennials. To him they are carefree, self-obsessed, and spoiled children who live in their own bubbles, endlessly complaining but kept safe from the real horrors of the world.

Now the 200 souls are almost paid, and he longs to be free of his tasks and blessed with enlightenment. For more information about his background, see the introduction to this scenario.

Abilities

- *King of Slaughter:* All rolls in combat (to attack or avoid) against César have a *-2 modification.*
- *Bound to Higher Power:* César has made a pact with the Herald of Violence.
- *Fanatical:* He cannot be reasoned with or be persuaded to take another path in life.
- *Resurrection:* Wounds heal rapidly. Even death is just an annoyance. If César is killed and not beheaded, he will come back to life.

Combat [3]**, Influence** [3]**, Magic** [2]**.**

Combat [Considerable]

- Use human shield.
- Break bones.
- Foresee attack, and act first.

Influence [Considerable]

- Jackal servants.
- Loyal cultists.
- Abundance of resources.

Magic [Novice]

- Journeyman in Madness Magic (II).
- Summon the Herald of Violence.

Attacks

César is totally fearless. He reads any combat perfectly and can foresee any attack. He often uses other victims as human shields if he needs to protect himself. He will always try to get close to his opponents, disarms them by breaking bones, or breaking their leg so that he can watch them crawl. He prefers to fight unarmed with his fists, kicks and grips. He also uses any tool he finds: bottles, knives, hammers, etc. When he has a tool, feel free to let him deal **+1 Harm**. If someone tries to run away, he pulls up his handgun and tries to shoot them in the leg.

Unarmed: Foresee attack, and act first [1] [Distance: arm, when someone attacks, he strikes first]; Brutal punches [2] [Distance: arm]; Grab and break [1] [Distance: arm, if victim gets a **Serious** or **Critical Wound** the leg or the arm is broken]; Human shield [-] [Soaks **1 harm**, the victim takes full damage].

Magnum Handgun: Aimed shots [3] [Distance: room]; Shoot the Leg [2] [Distance: room, target falls to the ground].

Wounds & Harm Moves

Wounds: ○○○○○○ ☠

- Uses a human shield that soaks up most of the attack.
- A deep gash pumps out blood.
- Wipes blood from his lips and spits.
- Calls on Jackal to help.
- Stumbles and is disoriented (+2 to next attack).
- Gravely wounded (The King of Slaughter ability is ignored).
- Dies with a smile on his face, but will rise again from the dead.

The Herald of Violence

This god feasts on death and violence. It has existed in the midst of mankind throughout our imprisonment.

The god may appear in many shapes and forms. It may dress itself in human skins and disrobe them whenever it wishes. For César it appeared as a saintly woman resembling his mother. For the new King or Queen, it will assume a new shape.

Since the god cannot be killed or seriously harmed by humans that are not Enlightened or Awakened, or by Creatures that have Magic [3] or less it will not be presented with attributes. If it wishes to rip the characters apart it will do so.

For more information see the Core Rules page 234.

The Crown of Slaughter

The Crown of Slaughter is wrought of heavy black iron and barbed wire. When placed on the wearer's head, that person is bound to the Herald of Violence. It cannot be removed by anything other than an Awakened Human, a being that has Magic +6 or more, or another Elysian God. Sleepers cannot see the crown, but those that are sensitive might glimpse it through the Illusion.

Violence Attribute: The **Violence** attribute is now +5.

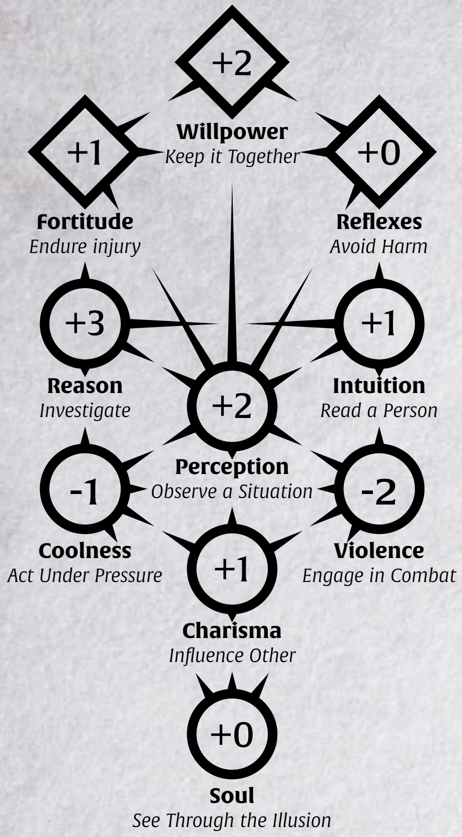
Pure Fanaticism: The resentment, hatred, and anger towards a group seen as the enemy will become pure and clear. All rolls to resist persuasion to spare these people have a +2 Modifier.

Resurrection: The wearer heals unnaturally fast. **Serious Wounds** vanish completely in a few hours and **Critical Wounds** heal within a day. If the wearer would be killed, they awaken, critically wounded, a couple of hours later. Only decapitation and destruction of the head will kill the wearer completely.

Jackal Servants: The wearer can create Jackals out of normal people. Whatever the Monarch of Slaughter hates, their Jackals seek to destroy. They are bound to the wearer and if the wearer dies, they will also die - since they are sworn to serve him even after death.

Bound to the Herald of Violence: At least 5 people must be sacrificed to the Herald of Violence each year until all 200 souls have been repaid. If this is not fulfilled, madness and pain will overtake the bearer. They will become animalistic and start to murder and feed on whomever they come upon. This will happen gradually, so the wearer still has the time to continue with the offerings. The Herald of Violence may also use the crown to call upon the Monarch of Slaughter at will.

ANABELLE DAWSON



+2
Willpower
Keep it Together
+1
Fortitude
Endure injury
+0
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+3
Reason
Investigate
+1
Intuition
Read a Person
+2
Perception
Observe a Situation
-1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
-2
Violence
Engage in Combat
+1
Charisma
Influence Other
+0
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Who you are

You are a sophomore deep into Women and Gender Studies. You are far more interested in partying somewhere than studying over the next week. Some people think you're bitchy and cold, but you're just busy. You look forward to slacking off over Spring Break.

Motivations

You've heard about a wild party just outside Ciudad Juárez and now on Spring Break you want to relax and enjoy yourself. You convinced some people to join, and you even asked Buck even if he, in many ways, is everything you despise. But damn, he's just so hot. If you're lucky, you can get a night or two out of Buck. He's stupid and violent, but he could be fun in bed.

- Get the others to relax and party.
- Make sure that your friend Raul will be okay.
- After a few drinks, try to hook up with Buck.

Resentments and Fears

You were raised classically white liberal, and believe that "white trash" are the scum of the Earth. You hate and fear them, no matter how many times you go through classes about structural poverty and the construction of whiteness.

Things In Your Possession

Cell Phone, Purse with wallet, pepper spray, condoms, credit card ($800), and $80 cash.

Wounds

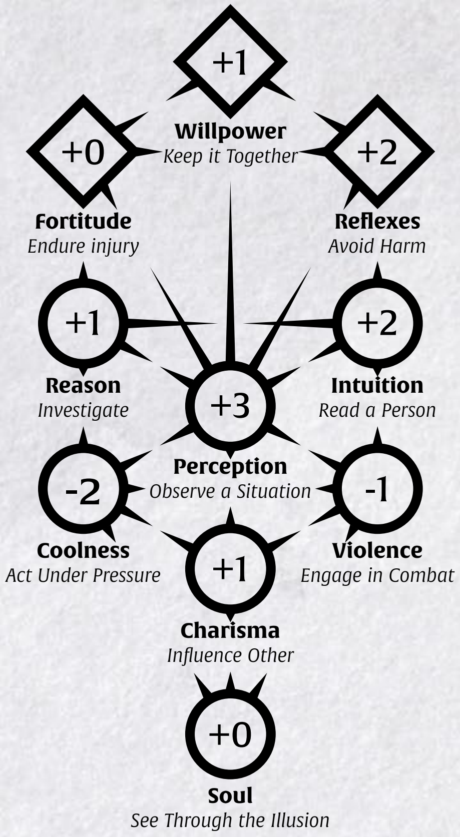
Serious Wounds (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

■ *Composed*	
☐ *Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐ *Unfocused*	–1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐ *Distressed*	–1 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Neurotic*	–2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐ *Irrational*	–2 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Unhinged*	–3 to Disadvantage rolls
	+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐ *Broken*	The GM makes a Move

RAUL MENENDEZ


+1
Willpower
Keep it Together
+0
Fortitude
Endure injury
+2
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+1
Reason
Investigate
+3
Perception
Observe a Situation
+2
Intuition
Read a Person
-2
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+1
Charisma
Influence Other
-1
Violence
Engage in Combat
+0
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐
☐
☐
☐

Critical Wound (−1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐

Stability

■ *Composed*	
☐ *Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐ *Unfocused*	−1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐ *Distressed*	−1 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Neurotic*	−2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐ *Irrational*	−2 ***Keep it Together***
☐ *Unhinged*	−3 to Disadvantage rolls
	+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐ *Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Who you are

You are a junior studying art. Your parents are undocumented immigrants, but you were born in the States. You're reluctant to learn Spanish and only know a few words. You came out as gay in college, but your parents still don't know. You've had a number of flings but the one that stole (and later broke) your heart was Peter Paulson. The romance was everything you'd dreamed until he dumped you via a text message.

Motivations

Your ex-boyfriend, Peter, told you about a wild festival out in the Mexico desert. When Anabelle invited you to go along with her to a party in the desert, you figured the two things were the same. Deep inside you hope that you can find Peter there.

- Confront Peter over how he dumped you in a really rotten way.
- See if it is a possibility to get back together. Is he single?
- Try to get inspired at the party. Perhaps this (or the drugs) can fuel your art.

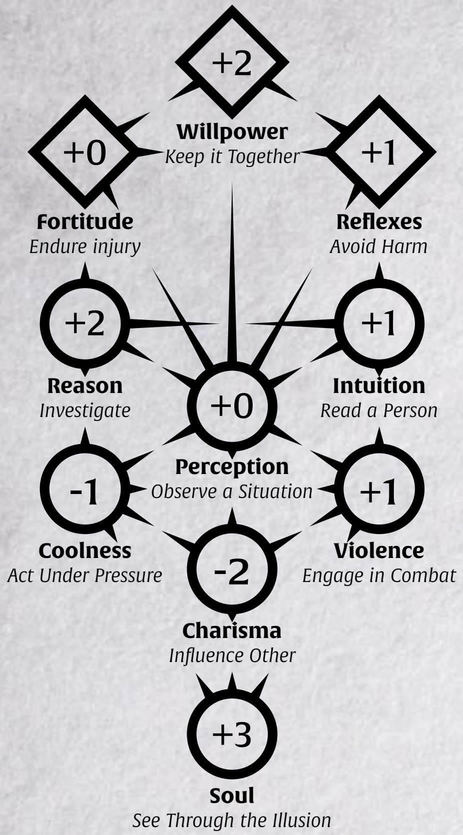
Resentments and Fears

Deep inside, you have a great resentment for religious people, especially preachers and pastors that shout about sin at the same time as they greedily fill their own pockets. The world would be better without them. At the same time, you fear them, and their devotion and deep insight. You are haunted by the notion that they might be right.

Things In Your Possession

Sketchbook, wallet, backpack with art supplies and a change of clothes, $70.00 cash, cellphone.

DAISY PETERSON


+2
Willpower
Keep it Together
+0
Fortitude
Endure injury
+1
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
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Reason
Investigate
+1
Intuition
Read a Person
+0
Perception
Observe a Situation
-1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+1
Violence
Engage in Combat
-2
Charisma
Influence Other
+3
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Wounds

Serious Wounds (–1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐
☐
☐
☐

Critical Wound (–1 *ongoing*) Stabilized

☐

Stability

■ *Composed*	
☐ *Uneasy* ☐ *Unfocused*	**Moderate stress:** –1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Shaken* ☐ *Distressed* ☐ *Neurotic*	**Serious stress:** –1 ***Keep it Together*** –2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐ *Anxious* ☐ *Irrational* ☐ *Unhinged*	**Critical stress:** –2 ***Keep it Together*** –3 to Disadvantage rolls +1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐ *Broken*	The GM makes a Move

Who you are

You are a pre-med student and a junior. Your mother and grandmother are both doctors, and you are following the family tradition. You are smart, and you know it, but your mind has drifted from your studies and you have gotten more and more caught up in conspiracy theories. You have 12,000 Twitter followers and you are a dispersal hub for medical conspiracy theories. You're also considering a podcast.

Motivations

The party sounds fun and nice, but you're really going to chase down rumors of a conspiracy. An online friend, Miguel, wrote about an organ theft ring that smuggled harvested organs from Mexico to the US. He said that, according to urban legends, people disappear at free parties in the desert outside Ciudad Juárez. You haven't heard from him in a while, and you're concerned that someone got to Miguel. Hey, if you can't find him, at least you got to go to a cool party.

- See if you can find any rumors about organ smuggling.
- Keep your eyes out for suspicious people.
- Flirt with Anabelle. You're in college, why not experiment?

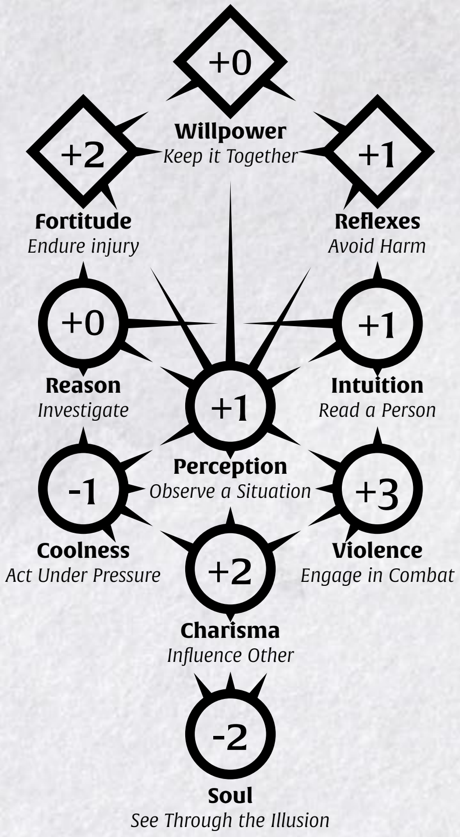
Resentments and Fears

You fear becoming a member of the staid middle class. Conspiracy theories seemed to be your way out. The more stories you tell yourself about the way the world "actually works", the angrier you become. You hate Big Pharma and are suspicious of vaccines. You don't understand why other people can't see that the government is tracking everyone through injections, even as you text on your smartphone and use an EZPass on tolls.

Things In Your Possession

Handbag, wallet, credit card ($4,500), $100 cash, cell phone (with a picture of Miguel).

BUCK JONES


+0
Willpower
Keep it Together
+2
Fortitude
Endure injury
+1
Reflexes
Avoid Harm
+0
Reason
Investigate
+1
Intuition
Read a Person
+1
Perception
Observe a Situation
-1
Coolness
Act Under Pressure
+3
Violence
Engage in Combat
+2
Charisma
Influence Other
-2
Soul
See Through the Illusion

Who you are

You are a sophomore on an athletic scholarship majoring in business. You know that people sometimes find you aggressive, but you call it "pumped." Sure, you're a hothead but you know that your physical prowess and skills on the field will get the coach and administration to overlook any "disciplinary problems." If somebody gets in your face, you don't hesitate to knock them down.

Motivations

You didn't have any plans for the weekend until Anabelle asked if you'd go with her to a party in Juarez. She's cute, and you think she'll put out if you go. Everything you do is documented on Instagram, where you've created the perfect college life for everyone to see. The dirty secret you have is that you're addicted to meth. She did say that there would be drugs at the party, so you've brought extra cash for a score.

- Score some drugs, get high, and party.
- Try to behave and not start a fight in front of Anabelle.
- Maybe, possibly, have a heart-to-heart with Anabelle. She's cute, and maybe she'll want to see you again after this.

Resentments and Fears

You hate Antifa, leftists, feminists, and snowflakes of all kinds. They're disrupting the natural order of things. No, you don't want to talk about your feelings, you just want to drink the pain away. Feelings suck. They don't make sense. Besides, your parents would be really disappointed if they realized their strong, talented son was struggling with anger and depression.

Things In Your Possession

$1200 cash, meth pipe, backpack with a change of clothes, cell phone.

Wounds

Serious Wounds (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐
	☐
	☐
	☐

Critical Wound (–1 *ongoing*)	Stabilized
	☐

Stability

■	*Composed*	
☐	*Uneasy*	**Moderate stress:**
☐	*Unfocused*	–1 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Shaken*	**Serious stress:**
☐	*Distressed*	–1 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Neurotic*	–2 to Disadvantage rolls
☐	*Anxious*	**Critical stress:**
☐	*Irrational*	–2 ***Keep it Together***
☐	*Unhinged*	–3 to Disadvantage rolls
		+1 ***See Through the Illusion***
☐	*Broken*	The GM makes a Move

SCREAMS AND WHISPERS

Scenario Collection

It Started and Ended with Screams

Author
Matthew Dawkins

The Driver

Author
Robin Liljenberg

Additional Material
Alex Obernigg

Seven Sisters

Authors
Gunilla Jonsson
Michael Petersen

Translation
Jens Klots

Judgment

Author
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Playtesters
Esther Kiehl, Chris Osborne, Rhona Robson, Pete Seed, Dan Spinks, Nick Townsend.

His Last Hope

Author
Magnus Seter

Additional Material
Petter Nallo

The Shunned

Author
Jonas Nelson

Additional Material
Petter Nallo

Playtesters
Mikael Erkas, Niklas Freidwall, David Humphrey, Daniel Humphrey, Andreas Nordlund, Patrick Readshaw, Magnus Westerstrand.

Downfall

Author
M. Martial

Hell is Other People

Author
Anders Fager

Assistant to Mr Fager
Claudine Carpenter

Playtesters
Ludivine Laurent & Léa Van Gheluwe took a ride as Sandra. Bruno Salvador & Frangon Chosnot took the Bishop out. Rolin Barbey & Paul Durand Lupinsk rode as Laurent.

Inspired by
No Exit by Jean-Paul Sartre

Desert Whispers

Author
Topher Burk

Additional Material
Petter Nallo

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SCREAMS AND WHISPERS

Screams and Whispers contains nine stand-alone scenarios for *KULT: Divinity Lost*. They follow a variation of themes and touch upon different genres of horror, all firmly rooted within the KULT mythology. All scenarios are designed to be pick-up-and-play.

It Started and Ended with Screams

The players are all teenagers sent to St. Jude's Center for Troubled Youths. Here, in this strict institution, where the windows are barred and the doors are locked, they soon discover that this place has many secrets. Themes of this scenario include systemic abuse, desperate pacts, and human frailty.

The Driver

This scenario focuses on a one-on-one story (1 gamemaster and 1 player). From a player participating setup both participants play to find out where the Driver's journey takes them.

Seven Sisters

Berlin, 1945. WWII is drawing to its close. British agents are sent into a bombed-out Berlin on a secret mission. In this time of chaos and suffering, the borders to Inferno are thin, and the players become entangled with servants of the Death Angel Thaumiel.

Judgment

In the near future, a family tragedy plays out during an intense heat wave in Phoenix, Arizona. Here, wills and agendas clash in a scenario with televangelists, illegal abortion clinics, mega-churches, betrayal, a Death magician seeking revenge, and layer upon layer of secrets.

His Last Hope

A classic KULT scenario, updated and expanded for *KULT: Divinity Lost*. Four childhood friends are lured into a meeting that unlocks hidden, and disturbing, memories. The scenario takes place in both 2019 and 1999.

The Shunned

Following a school shooting in the fictional town of Devonsport, the player characters are sent to investigate a number of mysterious phenomena in the grief-stricken community. Two old enemies have returned and use the people of Devonsport as their pawns. What side will the player characters fall on?

Downfall

When an aspiring writer goes missing, all he leaves behind are unpaid bills, a locked suitcase, and a tattered yellow notebook. His friends and relatives embark on an investigation to piece together a gruesome tale of self-discovery, enlightenment, and passion.

Hell is Other People

Three people ride in a limousine through a dark and nameless city. The close and claustrophobic ride reveals more, perhaps too much, about their hidden secrets, and the desperate desires and envy they hold for each other.

Desert Whispers

A long weekend in Juarez, Mexico. A swinging party where nothing is forbidden. In the cold night of the desert, who will save you from your host, your friends, or even yourself? The characters stumble upon a gathering of Jackals in this intense slasher tale.

◆

Screams and Whispers is meant for an Adult audience.

You need *KULT: Divinity Lost* to play *Screams and Whispers.*

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